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MONEY:

A Comedy

IN FIVE ACTS;

AS

PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE LADY OF LYONS," "RICHELIEU," "RIENZI," &c.

Lytton, Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1st. Baron

'Tis a very good world we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world that ever was known!

Old Truism.

Und, es herrscht der Erde Gott, das Geld.—SCHILLER.

FOURTH EDITION.

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LONDON:
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Stamford Street.

DEDICATED

To JOHN FORSTER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

THE LIVES OF STATESMEN OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

A SLIGHT MEMORIAL

OF SINCERE RESPECT AND CORDIAL FRIENDSHIP:

ALTHOUGH

(FOR WE ARE ALL HUMAN!)

HE HAS IN ONE INSTANCE,

AND BUT ONE,

SUFFERED HIS JUDGMENT

TO BE MISLED

BY TOO GREAT A REGARD

FOR

"MONEY!"

London,
Nov., 1840.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET.

MEN.

LORD GLOSSMORE	MR. VINING.
SIR JOHN VESEY, BART., Knight of the Guelph, F.R.S., F.S.A.	MR. STRICKLAND.
SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT	MR. LACY.
STOUT	MR. D. REES.
GRAVES	MR. WEBSTER.
EVELYN	MR. MACREADY.
CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH	MR. WRENCH.
SHARP	MR. WALDRON.
TOKE	MR. OXBERRY.
FRANTZ, *Tailor*	MR. O. SMITH.
TABOURET, *Upholsterer*	MR. HOWE.
MACFINCH, *Jeweller and Silversmith*	MR. GOUGH.
MACSTUCCO, *Architect*	MR. MATHEWS.
KITE, *Horse-dealer*	MR. SANTER.
CRIMSON, *Portrait-painter*	MR. GALLOT.
GRAB, *Publisher*	MR. CAULFIELD.
PATENT, *Coach-builder*	MR. CLARKE.
Members of the * * * *Club, Servants, &c.*	

WOMEN.

LADY FRANKLIN, *half-sister to* SIR JOHN VESEY	MRS. GLOVER.
GEORGINA, *daughter to* SIR JOHN	MISS HORTON.
CLARA, *companion to* LADY FRANKLIN, *cousin to* EVELYN	MISS FAUCIT.

Scene, London, 1840.

MONEY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A drawing-room in SIR JOHN VESEY*'s house; folding-doors at the back, which open on another drawing-room. To the right a table, with newspapers, books, &c.; to the left a sofa writing-table.*

SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN (*reading a letter edged with black*).

YES, he says at two precisely. "Dear Sir John, as since the death of my sainted Maria,"—Hum—that's his wife; she made him a martyr, and now he makes her a saint!

GEORGINA.

Well, as since her death?—

SIR JOHN (*reading*).

"I have been living in chambers, where I cannot so well invite ladies, you will allow me to bring Mr. Sharp, the lawyer, to read the will of the late Mr.

Mordaunt (to which I am appointed executor) at your house—your daughter being the nearest relation. I shall be with you at two precisely. Henry Graves."

GEORGINA.

And you really feel sure that poor Mr. Mordaunt has made me his heiress?

SIR JOHN.

Ay, the richest heiress in England. Can you doubt it? Are you not his nearest relation? Niece by your poor mother, his own sister. All the time he was making this enormous fortune in India did we ever miss sending him little reminiscences of our disinterested affection? When he was last in England, and you only so high, was not my house his home? Didn't I get a surfeit out of complaisance to his execrable curries and pillaws? Didn't he smoke his hookah—nasty old—that is, poor dear man—in my best drawing-room? And did you ever speak without calling him your "handsome uncle?"—for the excellent creature was as vain as a peacock,—

GEORGINA.

And so ugly,—

SIR JOHN.

The dear deceased! Alas, he *was*, indeed, like a kangaroo in a jaundice! And *if*, after all these marks of attachment, you are *not* his heiress, why then the finest feelings of our nature—the ties of blood—the principles of justice—are implanted in us in vain.

GEORGINA.

Beautiful, sir. Was not that in your last speech at the Freemasons' Tavern upon the great Chimney-sweep Question?

SIR JOHN.

Clever girl!—what a memory she has! Sit down, Georgy. Upon this most happy—I mean melancholy—occasion, I feel that I may trust you with a secret. You see this fine house—our fine servants—our fine plate—our fine dinners: every one thinks Sir John Vesey a rich man.

GEORGINA.

And are you not, papa?

SIR JOHN.

Not a bit of it—all humbug, child,—all humbug, upon my soul! As you hazard a minnow to hook in a trout, so one guinea thrown out with address is often the best bait for a hundred. There are two rules in life—FIRST, Men are valued not for what they *are*, but what they *seem* to be. SECONDLY, If you have no merit or money of your own, you must trade on the merits and money of other people. My father got the title by services in the army, and died penniless. On the strength of his services I got a pension of 400*l.* a-year—on the strength of 400*l.* a-year I took credit for 800*l.*: on the strength of 800*l.* a-year I married your mother with 10,000*l.*: on the strength of 10,000*l.* I took credit for 40,000*l.*, and paid Dicky Gossip three guineas a-week to go about everywhere calling me "Stingy Jack."

GEORGINA.

Ha! ha! A disagreeable nickname.

SIR JOHN

But a valuable reputation. When a man is called stingy, it is as much as calling him rich; and when a man's called rich, why he's a man universally respected. On the strength of my respectability I wheedled a constituency, changed my politics, resigned my seat to a minister, who, to a man of such stake in the country, could offer nothing less in return than a patent office of 2000*l.* a-year. That's the way to succeed in life. Humbug, my dear!—all humbug, upon my soul!

GEORGINA.

I must say that you—

SIR JOHN,

Know the world, to be sure. Now, for your fortune, as I spend all that I have, I can have nothing to leave you; yet even without counting your uncle, you have always passed for an heiress on the credit of your expectations from the savings of "Stingy Jack." The same with your education. I never grudged anything to make a show—never stuffed your head with histories and homilies; but you draw, you sing, you dance, you walk well into a room; and that's the way young ladies are educated now-a-days, in order to become a pride to their parents and a blessing to their husband—that is, when they have caught him. Apropos of a husband: you know we thought of Sir Frederick Blount.

GEORGINA.

Ah, papa, he is charming.

SIR JOHN.

He *was so*, my dear, before we knew your poor uncle was dead; but an heiress such as you will be should look out for a duke.—Where the deuce is Evelyn this morning?

GEORGINA.

I 've not seen him, papa. What a strange character he is—so sarcastic; and yet he can be agreeable.

SIR JOHN.

A humorist — a cynic! one never knows how to take him. My private secretary,—a poor cousin,—has not got a shilling, and yet, hang me if he does not keep us all at a sort of a distance.

GEORGINA.

But why do you take him to live with us, papa, since there 's no good to be got by it?

SIR JOHN.

There you are wrong; he has a great deal of talent: prepares my speeches, writes my pamphlets, looks up my calculations. My report on the last Commission has got me a great deal of fame, and has put me at the head of the new one. Besides, he *is* our cousin—he has no salary: kindness to a poor relation always tells well in the world; and benevolence is an useful virtue, particularly when you can have it for nothing. With our

other cousin, Clara, it was different: her father thought fit to leave me her guardian, though she had not a penny—a mere useless incumbrance; so, you see, I got my half-sister, Lady Franklin, to take her off my my hands.

GEORGINA.

How much longer is Lady Franklin's visit to be?

SIR JOHN.

I don't know, my dear; the longer the better, for her husband left her a good deal of money at her own disposal. Ah, here she comes.

SCENE II.

LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

My dear sister, we were just loud in your praises. But how 's this?—not in mourning?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Why should I go into mourning for a man I never saw?

SIR JOHN.

Still there may be a legacy.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Then there 'll be less cause for affliction. Ha!

ha! my dear Sir John, I 'm one of those who think feelings a kind of property, and never take credit for them upon false pretences.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Very silly woman! But, Clara, I see you are more attentive to the proper decorum; yet you are very, *very,* VERY distantly connected with the deceased—a third cousin, I think.

CLARA.

Mr. Mordaunt once assisted my father, and these poor robes are all the gratitude I can show him.

SIR JOHN.

Gratitude! humph! I am afraid the minx has got expectations.

LADY FRANKLIN.

So, Mr. Graves is the executor—the will is addressed to him? The same Mr. Graves who is always in black —always lamenting his ill fortune and his sainted Maria, who led him the life of a dog?

SIR JOHN.

The very same. His liveries are black—his carriage is black—he always rides a black galloway—and, faith, if he ever marry again, I think he will show his respect to the sainted Maria by marrying a black woman.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! we shall see.—(*aside*) Poor Graves, I always liked him: he made an excellent husband.

Enter EVELYN (*seats himself, and takes up a book, unobserved*).

SIR JOHN.

What a crowd of relations this Will brings to light: Mr. Stout, the Political Economist—Lord Glossmore—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Whose grandfather kept a pawnbroker's shop, and who, accordingly, entertains the profoundest contempt for everything popular, *parvenu*, and plebeian.

SIR JOHN.

Sir Frederick Blount—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Sir Fwedewick Blount, who objects to the letter R as being too *w*ough, and therefore d*w*ops its acquaintance: one of the new class of prudent young gentlemen, who, not having spirits and constitution for the hearty excesses of their predecessors, entrench themselves in the dignity of a lady-like languor. A man of fashion in the last century was riotous and thoughtless—in this he is tranquil and egotistical. He never does anything that is silly, or says anything that is wise. I beg your pardon, my dear; I believe Sir Frederick is an admirer of yours, provided, on reflection, he does not see "what harm it could do him" to fall in love with your beauty and expectations. Then, too, our poor cousin the scholar,—Oh, Mr. Evelyn, there you are!

SIR JOHN.

Evelyn—the very person I wanted: where have you been all day? Have you seen to those papers?—have you written my epitaph on poor Mordaunt?—Latin you know!—have you reported my speech at Exeter Hall?—have you looked out the debates on the Customs?—and, oh, have you mended up all the old pens in the study?

GEORGINA.

And have you brought me the black floss silk?—have you been to Storr's for my ring?—and, as we cannot go out on this melancholy occasion, did you call at Hookham's for the last H. B. and the Comic Annual?

LADY FRANKLIN.

And did you see what was really the matter with my bay horse?—did you get me the Opera-box?—did you buy my little Charley his peg-top?

EVELYN (*always reading*).

Certainly, Paley is right upon that point; for, put the syllogism thus——(*looking up*) Ma'am—Sir—Miss Vesey—you want something of me?——Paley observes, that to assist even the undeserving tends to the better regulation of our charitable feelings—no apologies—I am quite at your service.

SIR JOHN.

Now he 's in one of his humours!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You allow him strange liberties, Sir John.

EVELYN.

You will be the less surprised at that, madam, when I inform you that Sir John allows me nothing else.—I am now about to draw on his benevolence.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I beg your pardon, sir, and like your spirit. Sir John, I 'm in the way, I see ; for I know your benevolence is so delicate that you never allow any one to detect it ! [*Walks aside.*

EVELYN.

I could not do your commissions to-day—I have been to visit a poor woman, who was my nurse and my mother's last friend. She is very poor, *very*—sick—dying—and she owes six months' rent !

SIR JOHN.

You know I should be most happy to do anything for yourself. But the nurse—(*aside*) (some people's nurses are always ill !)—there are so many impostors about !—We 'll talk of it to-morrow. This most mournful occasion takes up all my attention. (*Looking at his watch*) Bless me ! so late ! I 've letters to write, and—none of the pens are mended ? [*Exit.*

GEORGINA (*taking out her purse*).

I think I will give it to him—And yet, if I don't get

the fortune after all!—Papa allows me so little!—then I *must* have those earrings (*puts up the purse*). Mr. Evelyn, what is the address of your nurse?

EVELYN (*writes and gives it*).

She has a good heart with all her foibles!—Ah! Miss Vesey, if that poor woman had not closed the eyes of my lost mother, Alfred Evelyn would not have been this beggar to your father.

[CLARA *looks over the address.*

GEORGINA.

I will certainly attend to it—(*aside*) if I get the fortune.

SIR JOHN (*calling without*).

Georgy, I say.

GEORGINA.

Yes, papa. [*Exit.*

EVELYN *has seated himself again at the table* (*to the right*), *and leans his face on his hands.*

CLARA.

His noble spirit bowed to this!—Ah, at least here I may give him comfort—(*sits down to write*). But he will recognise my hand.

LADY FRANKLIN.

What bill are you paying, Clara?—putting up a bank-note?

CLARA.

Hush!—O Lady Franklin, you are the kindest of human beings. This is for a poor person—I would not

have her know whence it came, or she would refuse it Would you?—No,—he knows *her* handwriting also!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Will I—what?—give the money myself?—with pleasure! Poor Clara—Why this covers all your savings—and I am so rich!

CLARA.

Nay, I would wish to do all myself!—it is a pride —a duty—it is a joy; and I have so few joys! But, hush!—this way.

[*They retire into the inner room and converse in dumb show.*

EVELYN.

And thus must I grind out my life for ever!—I am ambitious, and Poverty drags me down!—I have learning, and Poverty makes me the drudge of fools!—I love, and Poverty stands like a spectre before the altar! But, no, no—if, as I believe, I am but loved again, I will—will—what?—turn opium-eater, and dream of the Eden I may never enter!

LADY FRANKLIN (*to* CLARA).

Yes, I will get my maid to copy and direct this—she writes well, and *her* hand will never be discovered. I will have it done and sent instantly. [*Exit.*

CLARA *advances to the front of the stage, and seats herself*—EVELYN *reading*—*Enter* SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

SCENE III.

CLARA, EVELYN, SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

No one in the woom!—Oh, Miss Douglas!—Pway don't let me disturb you. Where is Miss Vesey—Georgina?

[*Taking* CLARA's *chair as she rises.*

EVELYN (*looking up, gives* CLARA *a chair, and re-seats himself*).

(*Aside*). Insolent puppy!

CLARA.

Shall I tell her you are here, Sir Frederick?

BLOUNT.

Not for the world—vewy pwetty girl this companion!

CLARA.

What did you think of the Panorama the other day, cousin Evelyn?

EVELYN (*reading*).

"I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss gentleman that 's all perfume!"

Rather good lines these.

BLOUNT.

Sir!

EVELYN (*offering the book*).

Don't you think so?—Cowper.

BLOUNT (*declining the book*).

Cowper!

EVELYN.

Cowper.

BLOUNT (*shrugging his shoulders, to* CLARA.)

Stwange person, Mr. Evelyn!—quite a chawacter!—Indeed the Panowama gives you no idea of Naples—a delightful place. I make it a wule to go there evewy second year—I am vewy fond of twavelling. You'd like Wome (Rome)—bad inns, but vewy fine wuins; gives you quite a taste for that sort of thing!

EVELYN (*reading*).

"How much a dunce that has been sent to roam
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home."

BLOUNT (*aside*).

That fellow Cowper says vewy odd things!—Humph!—it is beneath me to quawwell.—(*Aloud*) It will not take long to wead the will, I suppose. Poor old Mordaunt—I am his nearest male welation. He was vewy eccentwic. By the way, Miss Douglas, did you wemark my cuwicle? It is bwinging cuwicles into fashion. I should be most happy if you would allow me to dwive you out. Nay—nay—I should, upon my word.

[*Trying to take her hand.*

EVELYN (*starting up*).

A wasp!—a wasp!—just going to settle. Take care of the wasp, Miss Douglas!

BLOUNT.

A wasp!—where?—don't bwing it this way?—some people don't mind them! I've a particular dislike to wasps; they sting damnably!

EVELYN.

I beg pardon—it 's only a gad-fly.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Sir John will be happy to see you in his study, Sir Frederick. [*Exit* Servant.

BLOUNT.

Vewy well. Upon my word, there is something vewy nice about this girl. To be sure, I love Georgina —but if this one would take a fancy to me (*thoughtfully*)—Well, I don't see what harm it could do me! —*Au plaisir!* [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

EVELYN, CLARA.

EVELYN.

Clara!

CLARA.

Cousin!

EVELYN.

And you too are a dependant!

CLARA.

But on Lady Franklin, who seeks to make me forget it.

EVELYN.

Ay, but can the world forget it? This insolent condescension—this coxcombry of admiration—more galling than the arrogance of contempt!—Look you now—Robe Beauty in silk and cachemire—hand Virtue into her chariot—lackey their caprices—wrap them from the winds—fence them round with a golden circle—and Virtue and Beauty are as goddesses, both to peasant and to prince. Strip them of the adjuncts—see Beauty and Virtue poor—dependent—solitary—walking the world defenceless; oh, *then*, the devotion changes its character—the same crowd gather eagerly around—fools—fops—libertines—not to worship at the shrine, but to sacrifice the victim!

CLARA.

My cousin, you are cruel!

EVELYN.

Forgive me! There is a something, when a man's heart is better than his fortunes, that makes even affection bitter. Mortification for myself—it has ceased to chafe me. I can mock where I once resented. But *you*—YOU, so delicately framed and nurtured—one slight to you—one careless look—one disdainful tone—makes me feel the true curse of the poor man. His pride gives armour to *his own* breast, but it has no shield to protect another!

CLARA.

But I too have pride of my own—I too can smile at the pointless insolence——

EVELYN.

Smile—and he took your hand!—Oh, Clara, you know not the tortures that I suffer hourly! When others approach you—young—fair—rich—the sleek darlings of the world—I accuse you of your very beauty—I writhe beneath every smile that you bestow. No—speak not!—my heart has broke its silence, and you shall hear the rest. For you I have endured the weary bondage of this house—the fool's gibe—the hireling's sneer—the bread, purchased by toils, that should have led me to loftier ends: yes, to see you—hear you—breathe the same air—be ever at hand—that if others slighted, from one at least you might receive the luxury of respect:—for this—for this I have lingered, suffered, and forborne. Oh, Clara! we are orphans both—friendless both; you are all in the world to me: turn not away—my very soul speaks in these words—I LOVE YOU!

CLARA.

No—Evelyn—Alfred—No! say it not—think it not! it were madness.

EVELYN.

Madness!—Nay, hear me yet. I am poor—penniless—a beggar for bread to a dying servant. True!—But I have a heart of iron! I have knowledge—patience—health,—and my love for you gives me at last ambition! I have trifled with my own energies till now, for I despised all things till I loved thee! With you to toil for—your step to support—your path

to smoothe—and I—I, poor Alfred Evelyn—promise at last to win for you even fame and fortune! Do not withdraw your hand—*this* hand—shall it not be mine?

CLARA.

Ah, Evelyn! Never—never!

EVELYN.

Never!

CLARA.

Forget this folly; our union is impossible, and to talk of love were to deceive both!

EVELYN (*bitterly*).

Because I am poor!

CLARA.

And *I too!* A marriage of privation—of penury—of days that dread the morrow! I have seen such a lot! Never return to this again.

EVELYN.

Enough—you are obeyed. I deceived myself—ha!—ha!—I fancied that I too was loved. I, whose youth is already half gone with care and toil!—whose mind is soured—whom nobody *can* love—who ought to have loved no one!

CLARA (*aside*).

And if it were only *I* to suffer, or perhaps to starve!—Oh, what shall I say? Evelyn—Cousin?

EVELYN.

Madam.

CLARA.

Alfred—I—I—

EVELYN.

Reject me!

CLARA.

Yes! It is past! [*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Let me think. It was yesterday her hand trembled when mine touched it. And the rose I gave her—yes, she pressed her lips to it once when she seemed as if she saw me not. But it was a trap—a trick—for I was as poor then as now. This will be a jest for them all! Well, courage! it is but a poor heart that a coquet's contempt can break! And now that I care for no one, the world is but a great chess-board, and I will sit down in earnest and play with Fortune!

Enter LORD GLOSSMORE *preceded by* Servant.

SERVANT.

I will tell Sir John, my Lord!

(EVELYN *takes up the newspaper.*)

GLOSSMORE.

The secretary—hum!—Fine day, Sir; any news from the East?

EVELYN.

Yes!—all the wise men have gone back there!

GLOSSMORE.

Ha, ha!—not all, for here comes Mr. Stout, the great political economist.

SCENE V.

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN.

STOUT.

Good morning, Glossmore.

GLOSSMORE.

Glossmore !—the Parvenu !

STOUT.

Afraid I might be late—Been detained at the Vestry —Astonishing how ignorant the English poor are ! — Took me an hour and a half to beat it into the head of a stupid old widow, with nine children, that to allow her three shillings a-week was against all the rules of public morality !

EVELYN.

Excellent !—admirable !—your hand, Sir !

GLOSSMORE.

What ! you approve such doctrines, Mr. Evelyn ? Are old women only fit to be starved !

EVELYN.

Starved ! popular delusion ! Observe, my Lord— to squander money upon those who starve is only to afford encouragement to starvation !

STOUT.

A very superior person that!

GLOSSMORE.

Atrocious principles! Give me the good old times when it was the duty of the rich to succour the distressed.

EVELYN.

On second thoughts, *you* are right, my Lord. I, too, know a poor woman—ill—dying—in want. Shall *she*, too, perish?

GLOSSMORE.

Perish! horrible!—in a Christian country. Perish! Heaven forbid!

EVELYN (*holding out his hand*).

What, then, will you give her?

GLOSSMORE.

Ehem! Sir—the parish ought to give.

STOUT.

No!—No—No. Certainly not! (*with great vehemence.*)

GLOSSMORE.

No! no! But I say yes! yes! And if the parish refuse to maintain the poor, the only way left to a man of firmness and resolution, holding the principles that I do, and adhering to the constitution of our fathers, is to force the poor *on* the parish by never giving them a farthing oneself.

SCENE VI.

SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, LADY FRANKLIN, GEORGINA, GLOSSMORE, STOUT, EVELYN.

SIR JOHN.

How d'ye do!—Ah! How d'ye do, gentlemen? This is a most melancholy meeting! The poor deceased!—what a man he was!

BLOUNT.

I was chwistened Fwedewick after him! He was my first cousin.

SIR JOHN.

And Georgina his own niece—next of kin!—an excellent man, though odd—a kind heart, but no liver! I sent him twice a-year thirty dozen of the Cheltenham waters. It 's a comfort to reflect on these little attentions at such a time.

STOUT.

And I, too, sent him the Parliamentary Debates regularly, bound in calf. He was my second cousin—sensible man—and a follower of Malthus: never married to increase the surplus population, and fritter away his money on his own children. And now——

EVELYN.

He reaps the benefit of celibacy in the prospective gratitude of every cousin he had in the world!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Hush! hush! decency, Lady Franklin; decency!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Graves—Mr. Sharp.

SIR JOHN.

Oh, here's Mr. Graves; that 's Sharp, the lawyer, who brought the will from Calcutta.

SCENE VII.

GRAVES, SHARP, SIR JOHN, &c.

Chorus of SIR JOHN, GLOSSMORE, BLOUNT, STOUT.

Ah, Sir—Ah, Mr. Graves!

[GEORGINA *holds her handkerchief to her eyes.*

SIR JOHN.

A sad occasion!

GRAVES.

But everything in life is sad. Be comforted, Miss Vesey. True, you have lost an uncle; but I—I have lost a wife—such a wife!—the first of her sex—and the second cousin of the defunct! Excuse me, Sir John; at the sight of your mourning my wounds bleed afresh.

[Servants *hand round wine and sandwiches.*

SIR JOHN.

Take some refreshment—a glass of wine.

GRAVES.

Thank you!—(very fine sherry!)—Ah! my poor sainted Maria! Sherry was *her* wine: everything reminds me of Maria! Ah, Lady Franklin! *you* knew her. Nothing in life can charm me now. (*Aside.*) A monstrous fine woman that!

SIR JOHN.

And now to business. Evelyn, you may retire.

SHARP (*looking at his notes*).

Evelyn—any relation to Alfred Evelyn?

EVELYN.

The same.

SHARP.

Cousin to the deceased, seven times removed. Be seated, Sir; there may be some legacy, though trifling: all the relations, however distant, should be present.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Then Clara is related—I will go for her. [*Exit.*

GEORGINA.

Ah, Mr. Evelyn; I hope you will come in for something—a few hundreds, or even more.

SIR JOHN.

Silence! Hush! Whugh! ugh! Attention.

(*While the Lawyer opens the Will, re-enter* LADY FRANKLIN *and* CLARA.)

SHARP.

The will is very short—being all personal property. He was a man that always came to the point.

SIR JOHN.

I wish there were more like him!—(*Groans and shakes his head.*)

[*Chorus groan and shake their heads.*

SHARP (*reading*).

"I, Frederick James Mordaunt, of Calcutta, being, at the present date, of sound mind, though infirm body, do hereby give, will, and bequeath—imprimis, to my second cousin, Benjamin Stout, Esq., of Pall-Mall, London——

[*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.*

Being the value of the Parliamentary Debates, with which he has been pleased to trouble me for some time past—deducting the carriage thereof, which he always forgot to pay—the sum of 14*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.*

[*Chorus breathe more freely.*

STOUT.

Eh, what!—14*l.*? Oh, hang the old miser!

SIR JOHN.

Decency—decency! Proceed, Sir.

SHARP.

"Item.—To Sir Frederick Blount, Baronet, my nearest male relative——

[*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.*

BLOUNT.

Poor old boy!

[GEORGINA *puts her arm over* BLOUNT'S *chair.*

SHARP.

"Being, as I am informed, the best-dressed young gentleman in London, and in testimony to the only merit I ever heard he possessed, the sum of 500*l.* to buy a dressing-case.

[*Chorus breathe more freely;* GEORGINA *catches her father's eye, and removes her arm.*

BLOUNT (*laughing confusedly*).

Ha! Ha! Ha! Vewy poor wit—low!—vewy—vewy low!

SIR JOHN.

Silence, now, will you?

SHARP.

"Item.—To Charles Lord Glossmore—who asserts that he is my relation—my collection of dried butterflies, and the pedigree of the Mordaunts from the reign of King John.

[*Chorus as before.*

GLOSSMORE.

Butterflies!—Pedigree!—I disown the plebeian!

SIR JOHN (*angrily*).

Upon my word, this is too revolting! Decency—go on.

SHARP.

"Item.—To Sir John Vesey, Baronet, Knight of the Guelph, F.R.S., F.S.A., &c.——

[*Chorus as before.*

SIR JOHN.

Hush! *Now* it is really interesting!

SHARP.

"Who married my sister, and who sends me every year the Cheltenham waters, which nearly gave me my death—I bequeath——the empty bottles.

SIR JOHN.

Why, the ungrateful, rascally, old——

CHORUS.

Decency, Sir John—decency!

SHARP.

"Item.—To Henry Graves, Esq., of the Albany—

[*Chorus as before.*

GRAVES.

Pooh, gentlemen—my usual luck—not even a ring, I dare swear!

SHARP.

" The sum of 5000*l.* in the Three per Cents.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I wish you joy !

GRAVES.

Joy—pooh ! Three per Cents !—Funds sure to go ! Had it been *land*, now—though only an acre !—just like my luck.

SHARP.

" Item.—To my niece Georgina Vesey—

[*Chorus as before.*

SIR JOHN.

Ah, now it comes !

SHARP.

" The sum of 10,000*l.* India stock, being, with her father's reputed savings, as much as a single woman ought to possess.

SIR JOHN.

And what the devil, then, does the old fool do with all his money ?

CHORUS.

Really, Sir John, this is too revolting. Decency ! Hush !

SHARP.

" And, with the aforesaid legacies and exceptions, I do will and bequeath the whole of my fortune, in India

stock, Bonds, Exchequer bills, Three per Cents, Consols, and in the Bank of Calcutta (constituting him hereby sole residuary legatee and joint executor with the aforesaid Henry Graves, Esq.), to Alfred Evelyn, now or formerly of Trinity College, Cambridge—

[*Universal excitement.*

SHARP.

"Being, I am told, an oddity, like myself—the only one of my relations who never fawned on me, and who, having known privation, may the better employ wealth."—And now, Sir, I have only to wish you joy, and give you this letter from the deceased—I believe it is important.

EVELYN (*crossing over to* CLARA).

Ah, Clara, if you had but loved me!

CLARA (*turning away*).

And his wealth, even more than poverty, separates us for ever!

[*Omnes crowd round to congratulate* EVELYN.

SIR JOHN (*to* GEORGINA).

Go, child—put a good face on it—he's an immense match! My dear fellow, I wish you joy: you are a great man now—a very great man!

EVELYN (*aside*).

And *her* voice alone is silent!

LORD GLOSSMORE.

If I can be of any use to you—

STOUT.

Or I, Sir—

BLOUNT.

Or I? Shall I put you up at the clubs?

SHARP.

You will want a man of business. I transacted all Mr. Mordaunt's affairs.

SIR JOHN.

Tush, tush! Mr. Evelyn is at home *here*—always looked on him as a son! Nothing in the world we would not do for him! Nothing!

EVELYN.

Lend me 10*l.* for my old nurse!

[*Chorus put their hands into their pockets.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An anteroom in Evelyn's new house; at one corner, behind a large screen, MR. SHARP *writing at a desk, books and parchments before him.* — MR. CRIMSON, *the portrait-painter;* MR. GRAB, *the publisher;* MR. MACSTUCCO, *the architect;* MR. TABOURET, *the upholsterer;* MR. MACFINCH, *the silversmith;* MR. PATENT, *the coachmaker;* MR. KITE, *the horse-dealer; and* MR. FRANTZ, *the tailor.*—(Servants *in livery cross to and fro the Stage.*)

PATENT (*to* FRANTZ, *showing a drawing*).

Yes, sir; this is the Evelyn vis-à-vis! No one more the fashion than Mr. Evelyn. Money makes the man, sir.

FRANTZ.

But de tailor, de schneider, make de gentleman! It is Mr. Frantz, of St. James's, who take his measure and his cloth, and who make de fine handsome noblemen and gentry, where de faders and de mutters make only de ugly little naked boys!

MACSTUCCO.

He 's a mon o' teeste, Mr. Evelyn. He taulks o' buying a veela (villa), just to pool dune and build oop again. Ah, Mr. Macfinch, a design for a piece of pleete, eh!

MACFINCH (*showing the drawing*).

Yees, sir, the shield o' Alexander the Great, to hold ices and lemonade! It will coost two thousand poond!

MACSTUCCO.

And it 's dirt cheap—ye're Scotch, arn't ye?

MACFINCH.

Aberdounshire!—scraitch me, and I'll scraitch you!

Door at the back thrown open.—Enter EVELYN.

EVELYN.

A levee, as usual. Good day. Ah, Tabouret, your designs for the draperies; very well.—And what do you want, Mr. Crimson?

CRIMSON.

Sir, if you'd let me take your portrait, it would make my fortune. Every one says you 're the finest judge of paintings.

EVELYN.

Of paintings! paintings! Are you sure I'm a judge of paintings?

CRIMSON.

Oh, sir, did'nt you buy the great Correggio for 4000*l.*?

EVELYN.

True—I see. So 4000*l.* makes me an excellent judge of paintings. I 'll call on you, Mr. Crimson,—good day. Mr. Grab—oh, you 're the publisher who once refused me 5*l.* for my poem? you are right, it was sad doggrel.

GRAB.

Doggrel! Mr. Evelyn, it was sublime! But times were bad then.

EVELYN.

Very bad times with me.

GRAB.

But, now, Sir, if you give me the preference, I'll push it, Sir,—I'll push it! I only publish for poets in high life, Sir; and a gentleman of your station ought to be pushed!—500*l.* for the poem, Sir!

EVELYN.

500*l.* when I don't want it, where 5*l.* once would have seemed a fortune.

"Now I am rich, what value in the lines!
How the wit brightens,—how the sense refines!"

[*Turns to the rest, who surround him.*

KITE.

Thirty young horses from Yorkshire, sir!

PATENT (*showing drawing*).

The Evelyn vis-à-vis!

MACFINCH (*showing drawing*).

The Evelyn salver!

FRANTZ (*opening his bundle, and with dignity*).

Sare, I have brought de coat—de great Evelyn coat;

EVELYN.

Oh, go to——that is, go home! Make me as celebrated for vis-à-vis', salvers, furniture, and coats, as I

already am for painting, and shortly shall be for poetry. I resign myself to you—go !

[*Exeunt* MACFINCH, PATENT, &c.

Enter STOUT.

EVELYN.

Stout, you look heated !

STOUT.

I hear you have just bought the great Groginhole property.

EVELYN.

It is true. Sharp says it 's a bargain.

STOUT.

Well, my dear friend Hopkins, member for Groginhole, can't live another month—but the interests of mankind forbid regret for individuals ! The patriot Popkins intends to start for the boro' the instant Hopkins is dead !—your interest will secure his election ! —now is your time !—put yourself forward in the march of enlightenment !——By all that is bigoted here comes Glossmore !

SCENE II.

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN ; SHARP, *still at his desk.*

GLOSSMORE.

So lucky to find you at home ! Hopkins, of Groginhole, is not long for this world. Popkins, the brewer, is already canvassing underhand (so very ungentleman-

like !). Keep your interest for young Lord Cipher—a most valuable candidate. This is an awful moment—the CONSTITUTION depends on his return ! Vote for Cipher !

STOUT.

Popkins is your man !

EVELYN (*musingly*).

Cipher and Popkins—Popkins and Cipher ! Enlightenment and Popkins—Cipher and the Constitution ! I AM puzzled ! Stout, I am not known at Groginhole.

STOUT.

Your *property* 's known there !

EVELYN.

But purity of election—independence of votes—

STOUT.

To be sure : Cipher bribes *abominably*. Frustrate his schemes—preserve the liberties of the borough—turn every man out of his house who votes against enlightenment and Popkins !

EVELYN.

Right !—down with those who take the liberty to admire any liberty except *our* liberty ! That *is* liberty !

GLOSSMORE.

Cipher has a stake in the country—will have 50,000*l.* a-year—Cipher will never give a vote without considering beforehand how people of 50,000*l.* a-year will be affected by the motion.

EVELYN.

Right: for, as without law there would be no property, so to be the law for property is the only proper property of law!—That *is* law!

STOUT.

Popkins is all for economy—there 's a sad waste of the public money—they give the Speaker 5000*l.* a-year, when I 've a brother-in-law who takes the chair at the vestry, and who assures me confidentially he 'd consent to be Speaker for half the money!

GLOSSMORE.

Enough, Mr. Stout.—Mr. Evelyn has too much at stake for a leveller.

STOUT.

And too much sense for a bigot.

EVELYN.

Mr. Evelyn has no politics at all!—Did you ever play at *battledore?*

BOTH.

Battledore!

EVELYN.

Battledore!—that is, a contest between two parties: both parties knock about something with singular skill—something is kept up—high—low—here—there—everywhere—nowhere! How grave are the players! how anxious the bystanders! how noisy the battledores! But when this something falls to the ground, only fancy—it 's nothing but cork and feather! Go, and play by yourselves—I 'm no hand at it!

STOUT (*aside*).

Sad ignorance!—Aristocrat!

GLOSSMORE.

Heartless principles!—Parvenu!

STOUT.

Then you don't go *against* us?—I'll bring Popkins to-morrow.

GLOSSMORE.

Keep yourself free till I present Cipher to you.

STOUT.

I must go to inquire after Hopkins. The return of Popkins will be an era in history. [*Exit.*

GLOSSMORE.

I must be off to the club—the eyes of the country are upon Groginhole. If Cipher fail, the constitution is gone! [*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Both sides alike! Money *versus* Man!—Sharp, come here—let me look at you! You are my agent, my lawyer, my man of business. I believe you honest;—but what *is* honesty?—where does it exist?—in what part of us?

SHARP.

In the heart, I suppose, sir.

EVELYN.

Mr. Sharp, it exists in the breeches' pocket! Observe, I lay this piece of yellow earth on the table—I contemplate you both;—the man there—the gold here! Now, there is many a man in those streets honest as you are, who moves, thinks, feels, and reasons as well

as we do; excellent in form—imperishable in soul; who, if his pockets were three days empty, would sell thought, reason, body, and soul too, for that little coin! Is that the fault of the man?—no! it is the fault of mankind! God made man; behold what mankind have made a god! When I was poor I hated the world; now I am rich I despise it! Fools—knaves—hypocrites!——By the by, Sharp, send 100*l.* to the poor bricklayer whose house was burnt down yesterday.

Enter GRAVES.

Ah, Graves, my dear friend! what a world this is!—a cur of a world, that fawns on its master, and bites the beggar! Ha! ha! it fawns on *me* now, for the beggar has bought the cur!

GRAVES.

It is an atrocious world!—But astronomers say that there is a travelling comet which must set it on fire one day,—and that 's some comfort!

EVELYN.

Every hour brings its gloomy lesson—the temper sours—the affections wither—the heart hardens into stone! Zounds, Sharp! what do you stand gaping there for?—have you no bowels?—why don't you go and see to the bricklayer? [*Exit* SHARP.

SCENE III.

GRAVES, EVELYN.

EVELYN.

Graves, of all my new friends—and their name is Legion—you are the only one I esteem ; there is sympathy between us—we take the same views of life. I am cordially glad to see you !

GRAVES (*groaning*).

Ah ! why should you be glad to see a man so miserable ?

EVELYN.

Because I am miserable myself!

GRAVES.

You ! Pshaw ! *you* have not been condemned to lose a wife !

EVELYN.

But, plague on it, man, I may be condemned to take one !—Sit down, and listen. I want a confidant !—Left fatherless, when yet a boy, my poor mother grudged herself food, to give me education. Some one had told her that learning was better than house and land—that 's a lie, Graves.

GRAVES.

A scandalous lie, Evelyn!

EVELYN.

On the strength of that lie I was put to school—sent to college, a sizar. Do you know what a sizar is ? In pride he is a gentleman—in knowledge he is a scholar —and he crawls about, amidst gentlemen and scholars, with the livery of a pauper on his back ! I carried off

the great prizes—I became distinguished—I looked to a high degree, leading to a fellowship; that is, an independence for myself—a home for my mother. One day a young lord insulted me—I retorted—he struck me—refused apology—refused redress. I was a sizar!—a Pariah!—a thing to *be* struck! Sir, I was at least a man, and I horsewhipped him in the hall before the eyes of the whole College! A few days, and the lord's chastisement was forgotten. The next day the sizar was expelled—the career of a life blasted. That is the difference between Rich and Poor: it takes a whirlwind to move the one—a breath may uproot the other! I came to London. As long as my mother lived I had one to toil for; and I did toil—did hope—did struggle to be something yet. She died, and then, somehow, my spirit broke—I resigned myself to my fate; the Alps above me seemed too high to ascend—I ceased to care what became of me. At last I submitted to be the poor relation—the hanger-on and gentleman-lackey of Sir John Vesey. But I had an object in that—there was one in that house whom I had loved at the first sight.

GRAVES.

And were you loved again?

EVELYN.

I fancied it, and was deceived. Not an hour before I inherited this mighty wealth, I confessed my love, and was rejected because I was poor. Now, mark: you remember the letter which Sharp gave me when the will was read?

GRAVES.

Perfectly: what were the contents?

EVELYN.

After hints, cautions, and admonitions—half in irony, half in earnest (Ah, poor Mordaunt had known the world!), it proceeded—but I 'll read it to you:—"Having selected you as my heir, because I think money a trust to be placed where it seems likely to be best employed, I now—not impose a condition, but ask a favour. If you have formed no other and insuperable attachment, I could wish to suggest your choice: my two nearest female relations are my niece Georgina, and my third cousin, Clara Douglas, the daughter of a once dear friend. If you could see in either of these one whom you could make your wife, such would be a marriage that, if I live long enough to return to England, I would seek to bring about before I die." My friend, this is not a legal condition—the fortune does not *rest* on it; yet, need I say that my gratitude considers it a moral obligation? Several months have elapsed since thus called upon—I ought now to decide: you hear the names—Clara Douglas is the woman who rejected me!

GRAVES.

But now she would accept you!

EVELYN.

And do you think I am so base a slave to passion, that I would owe to my gold what was denied to my affection?

GRAVES.

But you must choose one, in common gratitude; you

ought to do so—yes, there you are right. Besides, you are constantly at the house—the world observes it: you must have raised hopes in one of the girls. Yes; it is time to decide between her whom you love, and her whom you do not!

EVELYN.

Of the two, then, I would rather marry where I should exact the least. A marriage, to which each can bring sober esteem and calm regard, may not be happiness, but it may be content. But to marry one whom you could adore, and whose heart is closed to you—to yearn for the treasure, and only to claim the casket—to worship the statue that you never may warm to life—Oh! such a marriage would be a hell the more terrible because Paradise was in sight.

GRAVES.

Georgina is pretty, but vain and frivolous.—(*Aside*) But he has no right to be fastidious—he has never known Maria!—(*Aloud.*) Yes, my dear friend, now I think on it, you *will* be as wretched as myself!—When you are married we will mingle our groans together!

EVELYN.

You may misjudge Georgina; she may have a nobler nature than appears on the surface. On the day, but before the hour, in which the will was read, a letter, in a strange or disguised hand, signed "*From an unknown friend to Alfred Evelyn,*" and enclosing what to a girl would have been a considerable sum, was sent to a poor woman for whom I had implored charity, and whose address I had given only to Georgina.

GRAVES.

Why not assure yourself?

EVELYN.

Because I have not dared. For sometimes, against my reason, I have hoped that it might be Clara! (*taking a letter from his bosom and looking at it*). No, I can't recognise the hand. Graves, I detest that girl!

GRAVES.

Who? Georgina?

EVELYN.

No; Clara! But I 've already, thank Heaven! taken some revenge upon her. Come nearer. (*Whispers*) I 've bribed Sharp to say that Mordaunt's letter to me contained a codicil leaving Clara Douglas 20,000*l*.

GRAVES.

And didn't it? How odd, then, not to have mentioned her in his will.

EVELYN.

One of his caprices: besides, Sir John wrote him word that Lady Franklin had adopted her. But I 'm glad of it—I 've paid the money—she 's no more a dependant. No one can insult her now—she owes it all to me, and does not guess it, man—does not guess it! —owes it to me, me whom she rejected;—me, the poor scholar!—Ha! ha!—there 's some spite in that, Eh?

GRAVES.

You 're a fine fellow, Evelyn, and we understand

each other. Perhaps Clara may have seen the address, and dictated this letter, after all!

EVELYN.

Do you think so?—I 'll go to the house this instant!

GRAVES.

Eh? Humph! Then I 'll go with you. That Lady Franklin is a fine woman! If she were not so gay, I think—I could—

EVELYN.

No; no; don't think any such thing: women are even worse than men.

GRAVES.

True; to love is a boy's madness!

EVELYN.

To feel is to suffer!

GRAVES.

To hope is to be deceived.

EVELYN.

I have done with romance!

GRAVES.

Mine is buried with Maria!

EVELYN.

If Clara did but write this!—

GRAVES.

Make haste, or Lady Franklin will be out!—A vale of tears—a vale of tears!

EVELYN.

A vale of tears, indeed! [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter GRAVES *for his hat.*

And I left my hat behind me! Just like my luck! If I had been bred a hatter, little boys would have come into the world without heads.* [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Drawing-rooms at SIR JOHN VESEY'S, *as in Scene I., Act I.*

LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, Servant.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Past two, and I have so many places to go to. Tell Philipps I want the carriage directly—instantly.

SERVANT.

I beg pardon, my Lady; Philipps told me to say the young horse had fallen lame, and could not be used to-day. [*Exit.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

Well, on second thoughts, that is lucky; now I have an excuse for not making a great many tedious visits. I

* For this melancholy jest Mr. Graves is indebted to a poor Italian poet.

must borrow Sir John's horses for the ball to-night. Oh, Clara, you must see my new turban from Carson's —the prettiest thing in the world, and so becoming!

CLARA.

Ah, Lady Franklin, you 'll be so sorry—but—but—

LADY FRANKLIN.

But what?

CLARA.

Such a misfortune! poor Smith is in tears—I promised to break it to you. Your little Charley had been writing his copy, and spilt the ink on the table; and Smith not seeing it—and taking out the turban to put in the pearls as you desired—she—she——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! laid it on the table, and the ink spoilt it. Ha! ha! how well I can fancy the face she made! Seriously, on the whole, it is fortunate; for I think I look best, after all, in the black hat and feathers.

CLARA.

Dear Lady Franklin, you really have the sweetest temper!

LADY FRANKLIN.

I hope so—for it's the most becoming turban a woman can wear! Think of that when you marry. Oh, talking of marriage, I've certainly made a conquest of Mr. Graves.

CLARA.

Mr. Graves! I thought he was inconsolable.

LADY FRANKLIN.

For his sainted Maria! Poor man! not contented with plaguing him while she lived, she must needs haunt him now she is dead.

CLARA.

But why does he regret her?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Why? Because he has everything to make him happy. Easy fortune, good health, respectable character. And since it is his delight to be miserable, he takes the only excuse the world will allow him. For the rest—it 's the way with widowers; that is, whenever they mean to marry again. But, my dear Clara, you seem absent—pale—unhappy——tears too?

CLARA.

No—no—not tears. No!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ever since Mr. Mordaunt left you 20,000*l.* every one admires you. Sir Frederick is desperately smitten.

CLARA (*with disdain*).

Sir Frederick!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! Clara, be comforted—I know your secret: I am certain that Evelyn loves you.

CLARA.

He did—it is past now. He misconceived me when he was poor; and now he is rich, it is not for me to explain.

LADY FRANKLIN.

My dear child, happiness is too rare to be sacrificed to a scruple. Why does he come here so often?

CLARA.

Perhaps for Georgina!

Enter SIR JOHN, *and turns over the books, &c., on the table, as if to look for the newspaper.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

Pooh! Georgina is my niece; she is handsome and accomplished—but her father's worldliness has spoilt her nature—she is not worthy of Evelyn! Behind the humour of his irony there is something noble—something that may yet be great. For his sake as well as yours, let me at least——

CLARA.

Recommend me to his pity! Ah, Lady Franklin! if he addressed me from dictation, I should again refuse him. No; if he cannot read my heart—if he will not *seek* to read it, let it break unknown.

LADY FRANKLIN.

You mistake me, my dear child: let me only tell him that you dictated that letter—that you sent that

money to his old nurse. Poor Clara! it was your little all. He will then know, at least, if avarice be your sin.

CLARA.

He would have guessed it, had *his* love been like *mine*.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Guessed it—nonsense! The handwriting unknown to him—every reason to think it came from Georgina.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Hum! Came from Georgina!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Come, *let* me tell him *this*. I know the effect it would have upon his choice.

CLARA.

Choice! oh, that humiliating word! No, Lady Franklin, no! Promise me!

LADY FRANKLIN.

But—

CLARA.

No! Promise—faithfully—sacredly.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Well, I promise.

CLARA.

You know how fearful is my character—no infant is more timid: if a poor spider cross the floor, you often laugh to see me grow pale and tremble; and yet I

would lay this hand upon the block—I would walk barefoot over the ploughshare of the old ordeal—to save Alfred Evelyn one moment's pain. But I have refused to share his poverty, and I should die with shame if he thought I had now grown enamoured of his wealth. My kind friend, you will keep your promise?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Yes, since it must be so.

CLARA.

Thanks. I—I—forgive me—I am not well.

[*Exit.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

What fools these girls are!—they take as much pains to lose a husband as a poor widow does to get one!

SIR JOHN.

Have you seen the Times newspaper? Where the deuce is the newspaper? I can't find the Times newspaper.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I think it is in my room. Shall I fetch it?

SIR JOHN.

My dear sister—you 're the best creature. Do!

[*Exit* LADY FRANKLIN.

Ugh! you unnatural conspirator against your own family! What can this *letter* be? Ah! I recollect something.

Enter GEORGINA.

GEORGINA.

Papa, I want—

SIR JOHN.

Yes, I know what you want well enough! Tell me—were you aware that Clara had sent money to that old nurse Evelyn bored us about the day of the will?

GEORGINA.

No! He gave me the address, and I promised, if—

SIR JOHN.

Gave you *the address?*—that's lucky! Hush!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Graves—Mr. Evelyn.

SCENE V.

GRAVES, EVELYN, SIR JOHN, GEORGINA, LADY FRANKLIN.

LADY FRANKLIN (*returning*).

Here is the newspaper.

GRAVES.

Ay—read the newspapers!—they'll tell you what this world is made of. Daily calendars of roguery and woe! Here, advertisements from quacks, money-

lenders, cheap warehouses, and spotted boys with two heads. So much for dupes and imposters! Turn to the other column—police reports, bankruptcies, swindling, forgery, and a biographical sketch of the snub-nosed man who murdered his own three little cherubs at Pentonville. Do you fancy these but exceptions to the *general* virtue and health of the nation?—turn to the leading article! and your hair will stand on end at the horrible wickedness or melancholy idiotism of that half the population who think differently from yourself. In my day I have seen already eighteen crisises, six annihilations of Agriculture and Commerce, four overthrows of the Church, and three last, final, awful, and irremediable destructions of the entire Constitution! And that 's a newspaper!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! your usual vein! always so amusing and good humoured!

GRAVES (*frowning and very angry*).

Ma'am—good humoured!—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! you should always wear that agreeable smile; you look so much younger—so much handsomer—when you smile!

GRAVES (*softened*).

Ma'am——A charming creature, upon my word!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You have not seen the last H. B.? it is excellent.

I think it might make you *laugh*. But, by-the-by, I don't think you can laugh.

GRAVES.

Ma'am—I have not laughed since the death of my sainted Ma——.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! and that spiteful Sir Frederick says you never laugh, because—But you 'll be angry?

GRAVES.

Angry!—pooh! I despise Sir Frederick too much to let anything he says have the smallest influence over me! He says I don't laugh, because—

LADY FRANKLIN.

You have lost your front teeth!

GRAVES.

Lost my front teeth! Upon my word! Ha! ha! ha! That 's too good—capital! Ha! ha! ha! (*laughing from ear to ear*).

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! ha!

[*They retire to the table in the inner drawing-room.*

EVELYN (*aside*).

Of course Clara will not appear!—avoids me as usual! But what do I care?—what is she to me? Nothing! I 'll swear this is her glove!—no one else has so small a hand. She 'll miss it—so—so! Nobody 's looking—I 'll keep it, just to vex her.

SIR JOHN (*to* GEORGINA).

Yes—yes—leave me to manage: you took his portrait, as I told you.

GEORGINA.

Yes—but I could not catch the expression. I got Clara to touch it up.

SIR JOHN.

That girl 's always in the way!

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

Good morning, dear John. Ah, Miss Vesey, you have no idea of the conquests you made at Almack's last night!

EVELYN (*examining him curiously while* SMOOTH *is talking to* GEORGINA).

And that 's the celebrated Dudley Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

More commonly called Deadly Smooth!—the finest player at whist, écarté, billiards, chess, and piquet, between this and the Pyramids—the sweetest manners!—always calls you by your Christian name. But take care how you play at cards with him!

EVELYN.

He does not cheat, I suppose?

SIR JOHN.

Hist! *No!*—but he always *wins!* Eats up a brace of lords and a score or two of guardsmen every season, and runs through a man's fortune like a course of the Carlsbad waters. He 's an uncommonly clever fellow!

EVELYN.

Clever? yes! When a man steals a loaf, we cry down the knavery—when a man diverts his neighbour's mill-stream to grind his own corn, we cry up the cleverness!—And every one courts Captain Dudley Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

Why, who could offend him? the best-bred, civilest creature—and a dead shot! There is not a cleverer man in the three kingdoms.

EVELYN.

A study—a study!—let me examine him! Such men are living satires on the world.

SMOOTH (*passing his arm caressingly over* SIR JOHN'*s shoulder*).

My dear John, how well you are looking! A new lease of life! Introduce me to Mr. Evelyn.

EVELYN.

Sir, it's an honour I 've long ardently desired.

[*They bow and shake hands.*

Enter SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

How d'ye do, Sir John. Ah, Evelyn—I wished so much to see you!

EVELYN.

'T is my misfortune to be visible!

BLOUNT.

A little this way. You know, perhaps, that I once paid my addwesses to Miss Vesey; but since that vewy

eccentwic will Sir John has shuffled me off, and hints at a pwior attachment—(*aside*) which I know to be false.

EVELYN (*seeing* CLARA).

A prior attachment!—(Ha! Clara!) Well, another time, my dear Blount.

Enter CLARA.

BLOUNT.

Stay a moment—I want you to do me a favour with regard to Miss Douglas!

EVELYN.

Miss Douglas!

BLOUNT.

Yes;—you see, though Georgina has great expectations, and Stingy Jack will leave her all that he has, yet she has only her legacy of 10,000*l.* at the moment—no doubt closely settled on herself too: Clawa has 20,000*l.* And, I think, Clawa always liked me a little.

EVELYN.

You! I dare say she did!

BLOUNT.

It is whispered about that you mean to pwopose to Georgina. Nay, Sir John more than hinted that was her pwior attachment!

EVELYN.

Indeed!

BLOUNT.

Now, as you are all in all with the family, if you could say a word for me to Miss Douglas, I don't see what harm it could do me!—(*aside*) I will punish Georgina for her pwerfidy.

EVELYN.

'Sdeath, man! speak for yourself! you are just the sort of man for young ladies to like—they understand you—you 're of their own level. Pshaw! you 're too modest—you want no mediator!

BLOUNT.

My dear fellow, you flatter me. I 'm well enough in my way. But you, you know, would cawwy evewything before you!—you 're so confoundedly wich!

EVELYN (*turning to* CLARA).

Miss Douglas, what do you think of Sir Frederick Blount? Observe him. He is well dressed—young—tolerably handsome (BLOUNT *bowing*)—bows with an air—has plenty of small talk—everything to captivate. Yet he thinks that if he and I were suitors to the same lady, I should be more successful because I am richer? What say you? Is love an auction? and *do* women's hearts go to the highest bidder?

CLARA.

Their hearts?—No!

EVELYN.

But their hands—yes! You turn away. Ah, you dare not answer that question!

GEORGINA (*aside*).

Sir Frederick flirting with Clara? I 'll punish him for his perfidy. *You* are the last person to talk so, Mr. Evelyn!—you, whose wealth is your smallest attraction —you, whom every one admires, so witty, such taste, such talent! Ah, I 'm very foolish!

SIR JOHN (*clapping him on the shoulder*).

You must not turn my little girl's head. Oh, you 're a sad fellow! Apropos, I must show you Georgina's last drawings. She has wonderfully improved since you gave her lessons in perspective.

GEORGINA.

No papa—No! pray, no! Nay, don't!

SIR JOHN.

Nonsense, child!—it's very odd, but she's more afraid of *you* than of any one!

SMOOTH (*to* BLOUNT, *taking snuff*).

He 's an excellent father, our dear John! and supplies the place of a mother to her.

[*Turns away to* LADY FRANKLIN *and* GRAVES.

[EVELYN *and* GEORGINA *seat themselves, and look over the drawings*; SIR JOHN *leans over them*; SIR FREDERICK *converses with* CLARA; EVELYN *watching them.*

EVELYN.

Beautiful!—a view from Tivoli. (Death!—she looks down while he speaks to her!) Is there a little

fault in that colouring? (She positively blushes!) But this Jupiter is superb. (What a d——d coxcomb it is!) (*Rising*) Oh, she certainly loves him—I too can be loved elsewhere—I too can see smiles and blushes on the face of another!

GEORGINA.

Are you not well?

EVELYN.

I beg pardon. Yes, you are indeed improved! Ah, who so accomplished as Miss Vesey?

[*Takes up the drawings; pays her marked attention in dumb show.*

CLARA.

Yes, Sir Frederick, the concert was very crowded! Ah, I see that Georgina consoles him for the past! He has only praises for her, nothing but taunts for me!

BLOUNT.

I wish you would take my opewa-box next Saturday —'t is the best in the house. I 'm not wich, but I spend what I have on myself! I make a point to have evewything the best in a quiet way. Best opewa-box—best dogs—best horses—best house of its kind. I want nothing to complete my establishment but the best wife!

CLARA (*abstractedly*).

That will come in good time, Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Oh, it will come—will it? Georgina refused the trifler—*she* courts him (*taking up a portrait*). Why, what is this?—my own——

GEORGINA.

You must not look at that—you must not indeed. I did not know it was there!

SIR JOHN.

Your own portrait, Evelyn. Why, child! I was not aware you took likenesses?—that 's something new! Upon my word it 's a strong resemblance.

GEORGINA.

Oh, no—it does not do him justice. Give it to me. I will tear it.—(*Aside*) That odious Sir Frederick!

EVELYN.

Nay, you shall not.

CLARA.

So—so—he loves her then! Misery—misery! But he shall not perceive it! No—no—I can be proud too. Ha! ha!—Sir Frederick—excellent—excellent—you are so entertaining—ha! ha! (*laughs hysterically.*)

EVELYN.

Oh, the affectation of coquets—they cannot even laugh naturally!

[CLARA *looks at him reproachfully, and walks aside with* SIR FREDERICK.

But where is the new guitar you meant to buy, Miss Vesey—the one inlaid with tortoiseshell? It is near a year since you set your heart on it, and I don't see it yet!

SIR JOHN (*taking him aside confidentially*).

The guitar—oh, to tell you a secret—she applied the money I gave her for it to a case of charity several months ago—the very day the will was read. I saw the letter lying on the table, with the money in it. Mind, not a word to her—she 'd never forgive me!

EVELYN.

Letter!—money! What was the name of the person she relieved?—not Stanton?

SIR JOHN.

I don't remember indeed.

EVELYN (*taking out the letter*).

This is not her hand!

SIR JOHN.

No! I observed at the time it was not her hand, but I got out from her that she did not wish the thing to *be known*, and had employed some one else to copy it. May I see the letter? Yes, I think this is the wording. But I did not mean to tell you what case of charity it was. I promised Georgy I would not. Still,

how did she know Mrs. Stanton's address?—you never gave it to me!

EVELYN.

I gave it to her, Sir John.

CLARA (*at the distance*).

Yes, I'll go to the opera, if Lady Franklin will. Do go, dear Lady Franklin!—on Saturday, then, Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Sir John, to a man like me, this simple act of unostentatious generosity is worth all the accomplishments in the world. A good heart—a tender disposition—a charity that shuns the day—a modesty that blushes at its own excellence—an impulse towards something more divine than Mammon;—such are the true accomplishments which preserve beauty for ever young. Such I have sought in the partner I would take for life;—such I have found—alas! not where I had dreamed!—Miss Vesey, I will be honest—I say, then, frankly—(*as* CLARA *approaches, raising his voice and looking fixedly at her*)—I have loved another—deeply — truly — bitterly — *vainly!* I cannot offer to you, as I did to her, the fair first love of the human heart—rich with all its blossoms and its verdure. But if esteem—if gratitude—if an earnest resolve to conquer every recollection that would wander from your image;—if these can tempt you to accept my hand and

fortune, my life shall be a study to deserve your confidence.

[CLARA *stands motionless, clasping her hands, and then slowly seats herself.*

SIR JOHN.

The happiest day of my life!

[CLARA *falls back in her chair.*

EVELYN (*darting forward*). (*Aside.*)

She is pale; she faints! What have I done? Oh, heaven!—Clara!

CLARA (*rising with a smile*).

Be happy, my cousin—be happy! Yes, with my whole heart I say it—be happy, Alfred Evelyn!

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY'*s house.*

SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

And he has not pressed you to fix the wedding-day?

GEORGINA.

No; and since he proposed he comes here so seldom, and seems so gloomy. Heigho! Poor Sir Frederick was twenty times more amusing.

SIR JOHN.

But Evelyn is fifty times as rich!

GEORGINA.

Sir Frederick *dresses* so well!

SIR JOHN.

You 'll have magnificent diamonds! But a word with you: I saw you yesterday in the square with Sir Frederick; that must not happen again. When a young lady is engaged to one man, nothing is so indecorous as to flirt with another. It might endanger your marriage itself. Oh, it 's highly indecorous!

GEORGINA.

Don't be afraid, papa—he takes up with Clara.

SIR JOHN.

Who? Evelyn?

GEORGINA.

Sir Frederick. Heigho!—I hate artful girls.

SIR JOHN.

The settlements will be splendid! if anything happens, nothing can be handsomer than your jointure.

GEORGINA.

My own kind papa, you always put things so pleasantly. But do you not fear lest he discover that Clara wrote the letter?

SIR JOHN.

No; and I shall get Clara out of the house. But there is something else that makes me very uneasy. You know that no sooner did Evelyn come into possession of his fortune than he launched out in the style of a prince. His house in London is a palace, and he has bought a great estate in the country. Look how he lives!—Balls—banquets—fine arts—fiddlers—charities—and the devil to pay!

GEORGINA.

But if he can afford it—

SIR JOHN.

Oh! so long as he stopped *there* I had no apprehension; but since he proposed for you he is more

extravagant than ever. They say he has taken to gambling! and he is always with Captain Smooth. No fortune can stand Deadly Smooth! If he gets into a scrape he may fall off from the settlements. We must press the marriage at once.

GEORGINA.

Heigho! Poor Frederick! You don't think he is *really* attached to Clara?

SIR JOHN.

Upon my word I can't say. Put on your bonnet, and come to Storr and Mortimer's to choose the jewels.

GEORGINA.

The jewels!—yes—the drive will do me good. So you 'll send away Clara?—she 's so very deceitful.

SIR JOHN.

Never fear—yes—tell her to come to me.

[*Exit* GEORGINA.

Yes; I must press on this marriage; Georgina has not wit enough to manage him—at least till he's her husband, and then all women find it smooth sailing. This match will make me a man of prodigious importance! I suspect he 'll give me up her ten thousand pounds. I can't think of his taking to gambling, for I love him as a son—and I look on his money as my own.

SCENE II.

CLARA, SIR JOHN.

SIR JOHN.

Clara, my love!

CLARA.

Sir—

SIR JOHN.

My dear, what I am going to say may appear a little rude and unkind, but you know my character is frankness.—To the point, then: my poor child, I 'm aware of your attachment to Mr. Evelyn——

CLARA.

Sir! *my attachment?*

SIR JOHN.

It is generally remarked. Lady Kind says you are falling away. My poor girl, I pity you—I do, indeed! * "Now, there 's that letter you wrote to his old "nurse—it has got about somehow—and the world is "so ill natured. I don't know if I did right; but, after "he had proposed to Georgy—(of course not before!) "—I thought it so unpleasant for you, as a young lady, "to be suspected of anything forward with respect to a "man who was not attached to you, that I rather let it "be supposed that Georgy *herself* wrote the letter.

CLARA.

"Sir, I don't know what right you had to——

* The lines between inverted commas are omitted on the stage.

SIR JOHN.

"That 's very true, my dear; and I 've been thinking "since that I ought perhaps to tell Mr. Evelyn that "the letter was yours—shall I?

CLARA.

"No, Sir; I beg you will not. I—I"—(*weeps.*)

SIR JOHN.

My dear Clara, don't take on; I would not have said this for the world, if I was not a little anxious about my own girl. Georgina is so unhappy at what every one says of your attachment——

CLARA.

Every one?—Oh, torture!

SIR JOHN.

That it preys on her spirits—it even irritates her temper! You see, though the marriage will take place almost immediately, Mr. Evelyn does not come so often as he ought. In a word, I fear these little jealousies and suspicions will tend to embitter their future union—I 'm a father—forgive me.

CLARA.

Embitter their union! Oh, never! What would you have me do, Sir?

SIR JOHN.

Why, you 're now independent. Lady Franklin seems resolved to stay in town. Surely she can't mean to take her money out of the family by some foolish inclination for Mr. Graves! He's always purring and

whining about the house, like a black cat in the megrims. What think you, eh?

CLARA.

Sir, it was of myself—my unhappy self—you were speaking.

SIR JOHN.

Sly!——True; true! What I meant to say was this:—Lady Franklin persists in staying *here:* you are your own mistress. Mrs. Carlton, aunt to my late wife, is going abroad for a short time, and would be delighted if you would accompany her.

CLARA.

It is the very favour I would have asked of you. (*Aside.*) I shall escape at least the struggle and the shame. When does she go?

SIR JOHN.

In five days—next Monday.—You forgive me?

CLARA.

Sir, I thank you.

SIR JOHN (*drawing the table*).

Suppose, then, you write a line to her yourself, and settle it at once?

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

The carriage, Sir John; Miss Vesey is quite ready.

SIR JOHN.

"Wait a moment. SHALL I tell Evelyn you wrote "the letter?

CLARA.

"No, Sir, I implore you.

SIR JOHN.

"But it would be awkward for Georgy, if discovered.

CLARA.

"It *never* shall be.

SIR JOHN.

"Well, well, as you please. I know nothing could be "so painful to a young lady of pride and delicacy."—— James, if Mr. Serious, the clergyman, calls, say I am gone to the great meeting at Exeter Hall: if Lord Spruce calls, say you believe I 'm gone to the rehearsal of Cinderella. Oh! and if MacFinch should come—(MacFinch, who duns me three times a-week)—say I 've hurried off to Garraways to bid for the great Bulstrode estate. Just put the Duke of Lofty's card carelessly on the hall table. And, I say, James, I expect two gentlemen a little before dinner—Mr. Squab the Radical, and Mr. Qualm of the great Marylebone Conservative Association. Show Squab into the study, and be sure to give him the "Weekly True Sun,"—Qualm into the back parlour with the "Times" and the "Morning Post." One must have a little management in this world. All humbug!—all humbug, upon my soul!

[*Exit.*

CLARA (*folding the letter*).

There—it is decided! A few days, and we are parted for ever!—a few weeks, and another will bear his name—his wife! Oh, happy fate! She will have the right to say to him—though the whole world should hear her—"I am thine!" And I embitter

their lot—I am the cloud upon their joyous sunshine! And yet, O Alfred! if she loves thee—if she knows thee—if she values thee—and, when thou wrong'st her, if she can forgive, as I do,—I can bless her, when far away, and join her name in my prayers for thee!

EVELYN (*without*).

Miss Vesey just gone? Well, I will write a line.

SCENE III.

EVELYN, CLARA.

EVELYN.

(*Aside.*) So—Clara! Do not let me disturb you, Miss Douglas.

CLARA (*going*).

Nay, I have done.

EVELYN.

I see that my presence is always odious to you. It is a reason why I come so seldom. But be cheered, Madam: I am here but to fix the day of my marriage, and I shall then go into the country—till—till——In short, this is the last time my visit will banish you from the room I enter.

CLARA (*aside*).

The last time!—and we shall then meet no more!—And to part thus for ever—in scorn—in anger—I cannot bear it!—(*Approaching him.*) Alfred, my cousin, it is true this may be the last time we shall meet—I have made my arrangements to quit England.

EVELYN.

To quit England ?

CLARA.

But, before I go, let me thank you for many a past kindness, which it is not for an orphan easily to forget.

EVELYN (*mechanically*).

To quit England !

CLARA.

I have long wished it : but enough of me.——Evelyn, now that you are betrothed to another—now, without recurring to the past—now, without the fear of mutual error and mistake—something of our old friendship may at least return to us.——And if, too, I dared, I have that on my mind which only a friend—a sister—might presume to say to you.

EVELYN (*moved*).

Miss Douglas—Clara—if there is aught that I could do—if, while hundreds—strangers—beggars—tell me that I have the power, by opening or shutting this worthless hand, to bid sorrow rejoice or poverty despair —if—if my life—my heart's blood—could render to *you* one such service as my gold can give to others—why, speak !—and the past you allude to,—yes, even that bitter past,—I will cancel and forget !

CLARA (*holding out her hand*).

We are friends, then !—you are again my cousin !—my brother !

EVELYN (*dropping her hand*).

Brother !—Ah ! say on !

CLARA.

I speak, then, as a sister—herself weak, inexperienced, ignorant, nothing—*might* speak to a brother, in whose career she felt the ambition of a man. Oh, Evelyn! when you inherited this vast wealth I pleased myself with imagining how you would wield the power delegated to your hands. I knew your benevolence—your intellect—your genius!—the ardent mind couched beneath the cold sarcasm of a long-baffled spirit! I saw before me the noble and bright career open to you at last—and I often thought that, in after years, when far away—as I soon shall be—I should hear your name identified, not with what fortune can give the base, but with deeds and ends to which, for the *great*, fortune is but the instrument;—I often thought that I should say to my own heart—weeping proud and delicious tears—"And once this man loved me!"

EVELYN.

No more, Clara!—oh, heavens!—no more!

CLARA.

But *has* it been so?—have you been true to your own self?——Pomp—parade—luxuries—pleasures—follies!—all these might distinguish others, they do but belie the ambition and the soul of Alfred Evelyn!——Oh! pardon me—I am too bold—I pain—I offend you.——Ah, I should not have dared thus much had I not thought, at times, that—that——

EVELYN.

That these follies—these vanities—this dalliance with a loftier fate—were your own work! You thought

that, and you were right! Perhaps, indeed, after a youth steeped to the lips in the hyssop and gall of penury—perhaps I might have wished royally to know the full value of that dazzling and starry life which, from the last step in the ladder, I had seen indignantly and from afar. But a month—a week—would have sufficed for that experience. Experience!—Oh, how soon we learn that hearts are as cold and souls as vile—no matter whether the sun shine on the noble in his palace, or the rain drench the rags of the beggar cowering at the porch. The extremes of life differ but in this:—Above, *Vice* smiles and revels—below, *Crime* frowns and starves. But you—did not you reject me because I was poor? Despise me if you please!—my revenge might be unworthy—I wished to show you the luxuries, the gaud, the splendour I thought you prized,—to surround with the attributes your sex seems most to value the station that, had you loved me, it would have been yours to command. But vain—vain alike my poverty and my wealth! You loved me not in either, and my fate is sealed!

CLARA.

A happy fate, Evelyn!—you love!

EVELYN.

And at last I am beloved.—(*After a pause, and turning to her abruptly*) Do you doubt it?

CLARA.

No, I believe it firmly!—(*Aside*) Were it possible for her not to love him?

EVELYN.

Georgina, perhaps, is vain—and light—and—

CLARA.

No—think it not! Once removed from the worldly atmosphere of her father's councils, and you will form and raise her to your own level. She is so young yet—she has beauty, cheerfulness, and temper;—the rest you will give, if you will but yet do justice to your own nature. And, now that there is nothing unkind between us—not even regret—and surely (*with a smile*) not revenge, my cousin—you will rise to your nobler self—and so, farewell!

EVELYN.

No; stay—one moment;—you still feel interest in my fate! Have I been deceived? Oh, why—why did you spurn the heart whose offerings were lavished at your feet? Could you still—still——? Distraction—I know not what I say!—my honour pledged to another—my vows accepted and returned! Go, Clara; it is best so! Yet you will miss some one, perhaps, more than me—some one to whose follies you have been more indulgent—some one to whom you would permit a yet tenderer name than that of brother!

CLARA (*aside*).

It will make him, perhaps, happier to think it!—Think so, if you will!—but part friends.

EVELYN.

Friends—and that is all! Look you, this is life!—

The eyes that charmed away every sorrow—the hand whose lightest touch thrilled to the very core—the presence that, like moonlight, shed its own hallowing beauty over the meanest things;—a little while—a year—a month—a day—and we smile that we could dream so idly. All—all—the sweet enchantment, known but once, never to return again, vanished from the world! And the one who forgets the soonest—the one who robs your earth for ever of its summer—comes to you with a careless lip, and says—"Let us part friends!" ——Go, Clara,—go,—and be happy if you can!

CLARA (*weeping*).

Cruel—cruel—to the last!——Heaven forgive you, Alfred! [*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Soft!—let me recall her words, her tones, her looks. *Does she love me?* She defends her rival—she did not deny it when I charged her with attachment to another: and yet—and yet—there is a voice at my heart which tells me I have been the rash slave of a jealous anger.——But I have made my choice—I must abide the issue!

Enter GRAVES, *preceded by* Servant.

SERVANT.

Lady Franklin is dressing, Sir.

SCENE IV.

GRAVES, EVELYN.

GRAVES.

Well, I 'll wait. (*Exit* Servant.) She was worthy to have known the lost Maria! So considerate to ask me hither—not to console me, *that* is impossible—but to indulge the luxury of woe. It will be a mournful scene.——(*Seeing* EVELYN) Is that you, Evelyn?—I have just heard that the borough of Groginhole is vacant at last. Why not stand yourself?—with your property you might come in without even a personal canvass.

EVELYN.

I, who despise these contests for the colour of a straw—this everlasting litigation of Authority *versus* Man—I to be one of the wranglers?—never!

GRAVES.

You are quite right, and I beg your pardon.

EVELYN.

(*Aside.*) And yet Clara spoke of ambition. She would regret me if I could be distinguished.——(*Aloud.*) To be sure, after all, Graves, corrupt as mankind are, it is our duty to try at least to make them a little better. An Englishman owes something to his country.

GRAVES.

He does, indeed! (*counting on his fingers*) East winds, Fogs, Rheumatism, Pulmonary complaints, and Taxes—(EVELYN *walks about in disorder.*) You

seem agitated—a quarrel with your intended? Oh! when you've been married a month, you won't know what to do without one!

EVELYN.

You are a pleasant comforter.

GRAVES.

Do you deserve a comforter? One morning you tell me you love Clara, or at least detest her, which is the same thing—(poor Maria often said she detested *me*)—and that very afternoon you propose to Georgina!

EVELYN.

Clara will easily console herself—thanks to Sir Frederick!

GRAVES.

He is young!

EVELYN.

Good looking!

GRAVES.

A coxcomb!

EVELYN.

And therefore irresistible!

GRAVES.

Nevertheless, Clara has had the bad taste to refuse him. I have it from Lady Franklin, to whom he confided his despair in re-arranging his neckcloth.

EVELYN.

My dear friend—is it possible?

GRAVES.

But what then? You *must* marry Georgina, who, to believe Lady Franklin, is sincerely attached to—your fortune. Go and hang yourself, Evelyn; you have been duped by them.

EVELYN.

By them—bah! If deceived, I have been my own dupe. Is it not a strange thing that in matters of reason—of the arithmetic and logic of life—we are sensible, shrewd, prudent men? But touch our hearts—move our passions—take us for an instant from the hard safety of worldly calculation—and the philosopher is duller than the fool! *Duped*—if I thought it!—

GRAVES.

To be sure!—you tried Clara in your *poverty;* it was a safe experiment to try Georgina in your *wealth.*

EVELYN.

Ha! that is true—very true. Go on.

GRAVES.

You'll have an excellent father-in-law. Sir John positively weeps when he talks of your income!

EVELYN.

Sir John, possibly—but Georgina?

GRAVES.

Plays affection to you in the afternoon, after practising first with Sir Frederick in the morning.

EVELYN.

On your life, Sir, be serious: what do you mean?

GRAVES.

That in passing this way I see her very often walking in the square with Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Ha! say you so?

GRAVES.

What then? Man is born to be deceived. You look nervous—your hand trembles; that comes of gaming. They say at the clubs that you play deeply.

EVELYN.

Ha! ha! Do they say that?—a few hundreds lost or won—a cheap opiate—anything that can lay the memory to sleep. The poor man drinks and the rich man gambles—the same motive to both! But you are right—it is a base resource—I will play no more.

GRAVES.

I am delighted to hear it, for your friend Captain Smooth has ruined half the young heirs in London. To play with him is to advertise yourself a bankrupt. Even Sir John is alarmed. I met him just now in Pall Mall; he made me stop, and implored me to speak to you. By the by, I forgot—do you bank with Flash, Brisk, Credit, and Co.?

EVELYN.

So, Sir John is alarmed?—(*Aside.*) Gulled by this cogging charlatan?—Aha! I may beat him yet at his own weapons!——Humph! Bank with Flash! Why do you ask me?

GRAVES.

Because Sir John has just heard that they are in a very bad way, and begs you to withdraw anything you have in their hands.

EVELYN.

I 'll see to it. So Sir John is *alarmed* at my gambling?

GRAVES.

Terribly! He even told me he should go himself to the club, this evening, to watch you.

EVELYN.

To watch me!—good—I will be there.

GRAVES.

But you will promise not to play.

EVELYN.

Yes—to play. I feel it is impossible to give it up!

GRAVES.

No—no! 'Sdeath, man! be as wretched as you please: break your heart, that 's nothing! but damme, take care of your pockets!

EVELYN.

I will be there—I will play with Captain Smooth—I will lose as much as I please—thousands—millions—billions; and if he presume to spy on my losses, hang me if I don't lose Sir John himself into the bargain!

(*Going out and returning*) I am so absent! What was the bank you mentioned? Flash, Brisk, and Credit. Bless me, how unlucky! and it's too late to draw out to-day. Tell Sir John I'm very much obliged to him, and he'll find me at the club any time before daybreak hard at work with my friend Smooth!

[*Exit.*

GRAVES.

He's certainly crazy! but I don't wonder at it. What the approach of the dog-days is to the canine species, the approach of the honeymoon is to the human race.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Lady Franklin's compliments—she will see you in the *boudoir*, Sir.

GRAVES.

In the *boudoir!*—go, go—I'll come directly.

[*Exit* Servant.

My heart beats—it must be for grief. Poor Maria! (*Searching his pockets for his handkerchief.*) Not a white one—just like my luck: I call on a lady to talk of the dear departed, and I've nothing about me but a cursed gaudy, flaunting, red, yellow, and blue abomination from India, which it's even indecent for a disconsolate widower to exhibit. Ah! Fortune never ceases to torment the susceptible. The *boudoir!*—ha! ha! the *boudoir!* [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

A Boudoir in the same house.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I take so much compassion on this poor man, who is determined to make himself wretched, that I am equally determined to make him happy! Well, if my scheme does but succeed, he shall laugh, he shall sing, he shall —Mum!—here he comes!

Enter GRAVES.

GRAVES (*sighing*).

Ah, Lady Franklin!

LADY FRANKLIN (*sighing*).

Ah, Mr. Graves! (*They seat themselves.*) Pray excuse me for having kept you so long. Is it not a charming day?

GRAVES.

An east wind, ma'am! but nothing comes amiss to you!—it's a happy disposition! Poor Maria!—*she* too was naturally gay.

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

Yes, she was gay. So much life, and a great deal of spirit.

GRAVES.

Spirit? Yes!—nothing could master it. She *would* have her own way! Ah! there was nobody like her!

LADY FRANKLIN.

And then, when her spirit was up, she looked so handsome! Her eyes grew so brilliant!

GRAVES.

Did not they?—Ah! ah! ha! ha! ha! And do you remember her pretty trick of stamping her foot?—the tiniest little foot—I think I see her now. Ah! this conversation is very soothing.

LADY FRANKLIN.

How well she acted in your private theatricals!

GRAVES.

You remember her Mrs. Oakley in "The Jealous Wife?" Ha! ha! how good it was!—ha! ha!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! Yes, in the very first scene, when she came out with (*mimicking*) "Your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me!"

GRAVES.

No—no! that's not it! more energy. (*Mimicking.*) "Your unkindness and barbarity will be the DEATH of me." Ha! ha! I ought to know how she said it, for she used to practise it on me twice a-day. Ah! poor dear lamb! (*wipes his eyes.*)

LADY FRANKLIN.

And then she sang so well! was such a composer! What was that little French air she was so fond of?

GRAVES.

Ha! ha! sprightly! was it not? Let me see—let me see.

LADY FRANKLIN (*humming*).

Tum ti—ti tum—ti—ti—ti. No, that 's not it.

GRAVES (*humming*).

Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum.

BOTH.

Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum. Ha! ha!

GRAVES (*throwing himself back*).

Ah! what recollections it revives! It is too affecting.

LADY FRANKLIN.

It *is* affecting, but we are all mortal. (*Sighs.*) And at your Christmas party, at Cyprus Lodge, do you remember her dancing the Scotch reel with Captain Macnaughten.

GRAVES.

Ha! ha! ha! To be sure—to be sure.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Can you think of the step?—somehow thus, was it not? (*dancing.*)

GRAVES.

No—no—quite wrong!—just stand there. Now then (*humming the tune*)—La—la-la-la—La, la, &c.

[*They dance.*

That 's it—excellent—admirable!

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

Now it 's coming.

Enter SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, GEORGINA,—*they stand amazed.*

[LADY FRANKLIN *continues to dance.*

GRAVES.

Bewitching—irresistible! It 's Maria herself that I see before me! Thus—thus—let me clasp——Oh, the devil! Just like my luck!—(*Stopping opposite* SIR JOHN.)

[LADY FRANKLIN *runs off.*

SIR JOHN.

Upon *my* word, Mr. Graves!

GEORGINA, BLOUNT.

Encore—encore! Bravo—bravo!

GRAVES.

It 's all a mistake! I—I—Sir John. Lady Franklin, you see—that is to say—I.——Sainted Maria! you are spared, at least, this affliction!

GEORGINA.

Pray go on!

BLOUNT.

Don't let us interwupt you.

GRAVES.

Interrupt me! I must say that this rudeness—this gross impropriety—to pry into the sorrows of a poor

bereaved sufferer, seeking comfort from a sympathizing friend—But such is human nature !

GEORGINA.

But, Mr. Graves !—(*following him.*)

GRAVES.

Heartless !

BLOUNT.

My dear Mr. Graves !—(*following him.*)

GRAVES.

Frivolous !

SIR JOHN.

Stay and dine !—(*following him.*)

GRAVES.

Unfeeling !

OMNES.

Ha !—ha !—ha !

GRAVES.

Monsters ! Good day to you. *

[*Exit, followed by* SIR JOHN, *&c.*

* For the original idea of this scene the author is indebted to a little *proverbe*, never, he believes, acted in public.

SCENE VI.

*The interior of * * * *'s Club ; night ; lights, &c. Small sofa-tables, with books, papers, tea, coffee, &c. Several members grouped by the fireplace ; one member with his legs over the back of his chair ; another with his legs over his table ; a third with his legs on the chimney-piece. To the left, and in front of the Stage, an old member reading the newspaper, seated by a small round table ; to the right a card-table, before which* CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH *is seated, and sipping lemonade ; at the bottom of the Stage another card-table.*

GLOSSMORE, STOUT.

GLOSSMORE.

You don 't come often to the club, Stout ?

STOUT.

No ; time is money. An hour spent at a club is unproductive capital.

OLD MEMBER (*reading the newspaper*).

Waiter !—the snuff-box. [Waiter *brings it.*

GLOSSMORE.

So, Evelyn has taken to play ? I see Deadly Smooth, " hushed in grim repose, awaits his evening prey. "

Deep work to-night, I suspect, for Smooth is drinking lemonade—keeps his head clear—monstrous clever dog!

Enter EVELYN; *salutes and shakes hands with different members in passing up the Stage.*

EVELYN.

How d' ye do, Glossmore? How are you, Stout?—*you* don't play, I think! Political Economy never plays at cards, eh?—never has time for anything more frivolous than Rents and Profits, Wages and Labour, High Prices and Low—Corn-laws, Poor-laws, Tithes, Currency—Dot-and-go-one—Rates, Puzzles, Taxes, Riddles, and Botheration! Smooth is the man. Aha! Smooth. Piquet, eh? You owe me my revenge!

[*Members touch each other significantly;* STOUT *walks away with the snuff-box;* Old Member *looks at him savagely.*

SMOOTH.

My dear Alfred, anything to oblige.

[*They seat themselves.*

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[Waiter *takes it from* STOUT, *and brings it back to* Old Member.

Enter BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

So, so! Evelyn at it again,—eh, Glossmore?

GLOSSMORE.

Yes, Smooth sticks to him like a leech. Clever fellow, that Smooth!

BLOUNT.

Will you make up a wubber?

GLOSSMORE.

Have you got two others?

BLOUNT.

Yes; Flat and Green.

GLOSSMORE.

Bad players.

BLOUNT.

I make it a wule to play with bad players; it is five per cent. in one's favour. I hate gambling. But a quiet wubber, if one is the best player out of four, can't do one any harm.

GLOSSMORE.

Clever fellow, that Blount!

[BLOUNT *takes up the snuff-box, and walks off with it;* Old Member *looks at him savagely.*

[BLOUNT, GLOSSMORE, FLAT, *and* GREEN *make up a table at the bottom of the Stage.*

SMOOTH.

A thousand pardons, my dear Alfred,—ninety repique —ten cards!—game!

EVELYN (*passing a note to him*).

Game! Before we go on, one question. This is Thursday—how much do you calculate to win of me before Tuesday next?

SMOOTH.

Ce cher Alfred! He is so droll!

EVELYN (*writing in his pocket-book*).

Forty games a-night—four nights, minus Sunday—our usual stakes—that would be right, I think!

SMOOTH (*glancing over the account*).

Quite—if I win all—which is next to impossible.

EVELYN.

It shall be possible to win twice as much, on one condition. Can you keep a secret?

SMOOTH.

My dear Alfred, I have kept myself! I never inherited a farthing—I never spent less than 4000*l.* a-year—and I never told a soul how I managed it.

EVELYN.

Hark ye, then—a word with you—(*they whisper*).

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[Waiter *takes it from* BLOUNT, *&c.*

Enter SIR JOHN.

EVELYN.

You understand?

SMOOTH.

Perfectly; anything to oblige.

EVELYN (*cutting*).

It is for you to deal. [*They go on playing.*

SIR JOHN (*groaning*).

There 's my precious son-in-law, that is to be, spending *my* consequence, and making a fool of himself.

(*Takes up the snuff-box ;* Old Member *looks at him savagely.*

BLOUNT.

I 'm out. Flat, a poney on the odd twick. That 's wight.—(*Coming up, counting his money.*) Well, Sir John, you don't play ?

SIR JOHN.

Play ? no ! Confound him—lost again !

EVELYN.

Hang the cards !—double the stakes !

SMOOTH.

Just as you please—done !

SIR JOHN.

Done, indeed !

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter !—the snuff-box.

(Waiter *takes it from* SIR JOHN.

BLOUNT.

I 've won eight points and the bets—I never lose—I never play in the Deadly Smooth set !

[*Takes up the snuff-box ;* Old Member *as before.*

SIR JOHN (*looking over* SMOOTH'*s hand. and fidgeting backwards and forwards*).

Lord have mercy on us! Smooth has seven for his point! What 's the stakes?

EVELYN.

Don't disturb us—I only throw out four. Stakes, Sir John?—immense! Was ever such luck?—not a card for my point. Do stand back, Sir John—I 'm getting irritable!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[Waiter *brings it back.*

BLOUNT.

One hundred pounds on the next game, Evelyn?

SIR JOHN.

Nonsense—nonsense—don 't disturb him! All the fishes come to the bait! Sharks and minnows all nibbling away at my son-in-law!

EVELYN.

One hundred pounds, Blount? Ah! the finest gentleman is never too fine a gentleman to pick up a guinea. Done! Treble the stakes, Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

I 'm on the rack! (*seizing the snuff-box.*) Be cool, Evelyn! take care, my dear boy!—now don 't ye—now don 't!

EVELYN.

What—what? You have four queens!—five to the king. Confound the cards!—a fresh pack. (*Throws the cards behind him over* SIR JOHN.)

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[*Different members gather round.*

FIRST MEMBER.

I never before saw Evelyn out of temper. He must be losing immensely!

SECOND MEMBER.

Yes, this is interesting!

SIR JOHN.

Interesting! there 's a wretch!

FIRST MEMBER.

Poor fellow! he 'll be ruined in a month!

SIR JOHN.

I 'm in a cold sweat.

SECOND MEMBER.

Smooth is the very devil.

SIR JOHN.

The devil 's a joke to him!

GLOSSMORE (*slapping* SIR JOHN *on the back*).

A clever fellow, that Smooth, Sir John, eh? (*Takes up the snuff-box;* Old Member *as before*). 100*l.* on this game, Evelyn?

EVELYN (*half turning round*).

You! well done, the Constitution! yes, 100*l.*!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

STOUT.

I think I'LL venture!—200*l.* on this game, Evelyn?

EVELYN (*quite turning round*).

Ha! ha! ha!—Enlightenment and the Constitution on the same side of the question at last! O, Stout, Stout!—great happiness of the greatest number—greatest number, number one! Done, Stout!—200*l.*!—ha! ha! ha!—I deal, Stout. Well done, Political Economy—Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Quite hysterical—drivelling! Arn't you ashamed of yourselves? His own cousins!—all in a conspiracy—a perfect gang of them.

[*Members indignant.*

STOUT (*to Members*).

Hush! he 's to marry Sir John's daughter.

FIRST MEMBER.

What, Stingy Jack's? oh!

CHORUS OF MEMBERS.

Oh! oh!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

EVELYN (*rising in great agitation*).

No more, no more—I 've done!—quite enough. Glossmore, Stout, Blount,—I 'll pay you to-morrow. I—I—. Death!—this is ruinous!

[*Seizes the snuff-box;* Old Member *as before.*

SIR JOHN.

Ruinous? I dare say it is! What has he lost? what *has* he lost, Smooth? Not much? eh? eh?

[*Omnes gather round* SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

Oh, a trifle, dear John!—excuse me! We never tell our winnings.—(*To* BLOUNT) How d'ye do, Fred?—(*To* GLOSSMORE) By the by, Charles, don't you want to sell your house in Grosvenor-square?—12,000*l.*, eh?

GLOSSMORE.

Yes, and the furniture at a valuation. About 3000*l.* more.

SMOOTH (*looking over his pocketbook*).

Um!—Well, we 'll talk of it.

SIR JOHN.

12 and 3—15,000*l.* What a cold-blooded rascal it is!—15,000*l.*, Smooth?

SMOOTH.

Oh, the house itself is a trifle, but the establishment—I 'm considering whether I have enough to keep it up, my dear John.

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter, the snuff-box! (*Scraping it round, and with a wry face*)—And it 's all gone! (*Gives it to the* Waiter *to fill.*)

SIR JOHN (*turning round*).

And it 's all gone!

EVELYN (*starting up and laughing hysterically*).

Ha! ha! all gone? not a bit of it. Smooth, this club is so noisy. Sir John, you are always in the way. Come to my house! come! Champagne and a broiled bone. Nothing venture, nothing have! The luck must turn, and by Jupiter we 'll make a night of it!

SIR JOHN.

A night of it!!! For Heaven's sake, Evelyn! EVELYN!!—think what you are about!—think of Georgina's feelings!—think of your poor lost mother!—think of the babes unborn!—think of—

EVELYN.

I 'll think of nothing! Zounds!—you don 't know

what I have lost, man; it's all your fault, distracting my attention! Pshaw—pshaw! Out of the way, do! Come, Smooth. Ha! ha! a night of it, my boy—a night of it! [*Exeunt* SMOOTH *and* EVELYN.

SIR JOHN (*following*).

You must not, you shall not! Evelyn, my dear Evelyn!—he's drunk—he's mad! Will no one send for the police?

MEMBERS.

Ha! ha! ha! Poor old Stingy Jack!

OLD MEMBER (*rising for the first time, and in a great rage*).

Waiter, the snuff-box!

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Anteroom in EVELYN*'s house, as in Scene I. Act II.* TABOURET, MACFINCH, FRANTZ, *and other tradesmen.*

TABOURET (*half whispers*).

So, I hear that Mr. Evelyn is turned gamester! There are strange reports about to-day—I don't know what to make of it! We must look sharp, Mr. Macfinch, we poor tradesmen, and make hay while the sun shines.

MACFINCH.

I wuish those geeming-houses were aw at the deevil! —it 's a sheam and a sin for gentlemen to gang and ruin themselves, when we honest tradesmen could do it for them with sae muckle advantage to the arts and coummerce o' the country!

[*Omnes shake their heads approvingly.*

Enter SMOOTH *from the inner room, with a pocketbook and pencil in his hand.*

SMOOTH (*looking round*).

Hum! ha! Fine pictures!—(*Feeling the curtains*)

The new-fashioned velvet, hem! good-proportioned rooms! Yes, this house is better than Glossmore's! Oh, Mr. Tabouret, the upholsterer! you furnished these rooms! All of the best? eh!

TABOURET.

Oh! the VERY best! Mr. Evelyn is not a man to grudge expense, Sir!

SMOOTH.

He is not indeed. You've been paid, I suppose, Tabouret?

TABOURET.

No, Sir, no—I never send in my bills when a customer is rich. (*Aside*) Bills are like trees, and grow by standing.

SMOOTH.

Humph! Not PAID? humph!

[*Omnes gather round.*

MACFINCH.

I dinna like that hoomph, there's something vara suspeecious abun' it.

TABOURET (*to the tradesmen*).

It's the great card-player, Captain Smooth—finest player in Europe—cleaned out the Duke of Silly Val. Uncommonly clever man!

SMOOTH (*pacing about the room*).

Thirty-six feet by twenty-eight—Um! I think a

bow-window *there* would be an *improvement:* could it be done easily, Tabouret?

MACFINCH.

If Mr. Evelyn wuishes to pool about his house, there's no mon like my friend Mr. MacStucco.

SMOOTH.

Evelyn? I was speaking of *myself.* Mr. MacStucco?—humph!

TABOURET.

Yourself? Have you bought the house, sir?

SMOOTH.

Bought it?—hum!—ha!—it depends—So you 've not been paid yet?—um! Nor you—nor you—nor you? Hum? ah!

TABOURET.

No, sir!—what *then?* No fear of Mr. EVELYN! Ha! ha!

OMNES (*anxiously*).

Ha! ha!—what then?

MACFINCH.

Ah, sir, what then? I 'm a puir mon with a family; this way, Captain! You 've a leetle account in the buiks; an' we 'll e'en wipe it out altogether, gin you 'll say what you mean by that Hoom ha!

SMOOTH.

Macfinch, my dear fellow, don't oblige me to cane you; I would not have Mr. Evelyn distressed for the world. Poor fellow! he holds very bad cards. So you 've not been paid yet? Don't send in your bills on any account—Mind! Yes; I don't dislike the house with some alteration. Good day to you—Hum! ha!

[*Exit, looking about him, examining the chairs, tables, &c.*

TABOURET.

Plain as a pikestaff!—staked his very house on an odd trick!

SCENE II.

The foregoing.—Enter SHARP *from the inner room, agitated and in a hurry.*

SHARP.

O Lord! O Lord!—who 'd have thought it? Cards are the devil's book! John!—Thomas!—Harris!—(*ringing the bell.*)

Enter Two Servants.

Tom, take this letter to Sir John Vesey's. If not at home, find him—he will give you a cheque. Go to

his banker's and get it cashed *instantly*. Quick—quick off with you!

TABOURET (*seizing* Servant).

What 's the matter?—what 's the matter? How 's Mr. Evelyn?

SERVANT.

Bad—very bad! Sate up all night with Captain Smooth! [*Runs off.*

SHARP (*to the other* Servant).

Yes, Harris, your poor master! O dear! O dear! You will take this note to the Belgian minister, Portland-place. Passport for Ostend! Have the travelling carriage ready at a moment's notice!

MACFINCH (*stopping* Servant).

Passport! Harkye, my mon; is he gaun to pit the saut seas between us and the siller?

SERVANT.

Don't stop me—something wrong in the chest—change of air—late hours—and Captain Smooth! [*Exit*

SHARP (*walking about*).

And if the bank should break!—if the bank *is* broke, and he can't draw out!—bound to Smooth!

TABOURET.

Bank!—what bank?

SHARP.

Flash's bank! Flash, brother-in-law to Captain Smooth! What have *you* heard?—eh?—eh?

TABOURET.

That there's an awful run on it!

SHARP.

I must be off. Go—go—you can't see Mr. Evelyn to-day!

TABOURET.

My account, Sir!

MACFINCH.

I've a muckle bairns and a sma' bill!

FRANTZ.

O Sare, de great gentlemen always tink first of de tailor!

SHARP.

Call again—call again at Christmas. The bank, the cards,—the cards, the bank! O dear! O dear!

[*Exit.*

TABOURET.

The bank!

MACFINCH.

The passport!

FRANTZ.

And all dat vill be seen of de great Evelyn coat is de back of it. *Donner und hagel!*—I vil arrest him—I vil put de salt on de tail of it!

TABOURET (*aside*).

I 'll slip down to the city and see how the bank goes!

MACFINCH (*aside*).

I 'll e'en gang to my coosin the la'yer. Nothing but peetience for us, Mr. Tabouret.

TABOURET.

Ay, ay,—stick by each other—share and share alike —that's my way, Sir.

OMNES.

Share and share alike. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter Servant, GLOSSMORE, *and* BLOUNT.

SERVANT.

My master is not very well, my lord; but I 'll let him know. [*Exit.*

GLOSSMORE.

I 'm very curious to learn the result of his gambling tête-à-tête.

BLOUNT.

Oh, he 's so howwidly wich, he can afford even a tête-à-tête with Deadly Smooth!

GLOSSMORE.

Poor old Stingy Jack: why, Georgina was *your* intended.

BLOUNT.

Yes; and I really liked the girl, though out of pique I pwoposed to her cousin. But what can a man do against money?

Enter EVELYN.

If we could start fair, you 'd see whom Georgina would pwefer: but she 's sacwificed by her father! She as much as told me so!

EVELYN.

So, so, gentlemen, we 've a little account to settle—one hundred each.

BOTH.

Don't talk of it.

EVELYN.

Well, I won't!—(*Taking* BLOUNT *aside.*) Ha! ha! you 'd hardly believe it—but I 'd rather not pay you just at present; my money is locked up, and I must wait, you know, for the Groginhole rents. So! instead of owing you one hundred pounds, suppose I owe you *five?* You can give me a cheque for the other four. And, harkye! not a word to Glossmore.

BLOUNT.

Glossmore! the gweatest gossip in London! I shall be delighted!—(*Aside*) It never does harm to lend to a wich man; one gets it back somehow. By the way,

Evelyn, if you want my gwey cab-horse, you may have him for two hundred pounds, and that will make seven!

EVELYN (*aside*).

That 's the fashionable usury: your friend does not take interest—he sells you a horse.—(*Aloud.*) Blount, it 's a bargain.

BLOUNT (*writing the cheque, and musingly*).

No; I don't see what harm it can do me; that off leg must end in a spavin.

EVELYN (*to* GLOSSMORE).

That hundred pounds I owe you is rather inconvenient at present; I 've a large sum to make up for the Groginhole property—perhaps you would lend me five or six hundred more—just to go on with?

GLOSSMORE.

Certainly! Hopkins is dead: your interest for Cipher would—

EVELYN.

Why, I can't promise *that* at this moment. But as a slight mark of friendship and gratitude, I shall be very much flattered if you 'll accept a splendid grey cab-horse I bought to-day—cost two hundred pounds!

GLOSSMORE.

Bought *to-day!*—then I 'm safe. My dear fellow! you 're always so princely!

EVELYN.

Nonsense! just write the cheque; and, harkye!—not a syllable to Blount!

GLOSSMORE.

Blount? He 's the town-crier! (*Goes to write.*)

BLOUNT (*giving* EVELYN *the cheque*).

Wansom's, Pall-mall East.

EVELYN.

Thank you. So you *proposed* to Miss Douglas!

BLOUNT.

Hang it! yes; I could have sworn that she fancied me; her manner, for instance, that very day you pwoposed for Miss Vesey,—otherwise Georgina—

EVELYN.

Has only half what Miss Douglas has.

BLOUNT.

You forget how much Stingy Jack must have saved! But I beg your pardon.

EVELYN.

Never mind; but not a word to Sir John, or he 'll fancy I 'm ruined.

GLOSSMORE (*giving the cheque*).

Ransom's, Pall-mall East. Tell me, did you win or lose last night?

EVELYN.

Win! lose! oh! No more of that, if you love me. I must send off at once to the banker's (*looking at the two cheques*).

GLOSSMORE (*aside*).

Why! he 's borrowed from Blount, too!

BLOUNT (*aside*).

That 's a cheque from Lord Glossmore!

EVELYN.

Excuse me; I must dress; I have not a moment to lose. You remember you dine with me to-day—seven o'clock. You 'll meet Smooth. (*With tears in his voice.*) It may be the last time I shall ever welcome you here! My——what am I saying?—Oh, merely a joke!—good by—*good* by.

[*Shaking them heartily by the hand. Exit by the inner room.*

BLOUNT.

Glossmore!

GLOSSMORE.

Blount!

BLOUNT.

I am afraid all 's not wight!

GLOSSMORE.

I incline to your opinion!

BLOUNT.

But I 've sold my gwey cab-horse.

GLOSSMORE.

Grey cab-horse! you! What is he really worth now?

BLOUNT.

Since he is sold, I will tell you—Not a sixpence!

GLOSSMORE.

Not a sixpence! he gave it to me!

[Evelyn *at the door, giving directions to a* Servant *in dumb show.*

BLOUNT.

That was devilish unhandsome! Do you know, I feel nervous!

GLOSSMORE.

Nervous? Let us run and stop payment of our cheques.

[Evelyn *shuts the door, and* Servant *runs across the stage.*

BLOUNT.

Hollo, John! where so fast?

SERVANT (*in great haste*).

Beg pardon, Sir Frederick, to Pall-mall East—Messrs. Ransom. [*Exit.*

BLOUNT (*solemnly*).

Glossmore, we are floored!

GLOSSMORE.

Sir, the whole town shall know of it!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter TOKE *and other* Servants.

TOKE.

Come, come, stir yourselves! we 've no time to lose. This room is to be got ready for the shawls. Mrs. Crump and the other ladies of our household are to wait here on the women before they go up to the drawing-room. Take away that desk: don't be lazy! and give me the newspaper.

[TOKE *seats himself; the* Servants *bustle about.*

Strange reports about my patron! and the walley is gone for the passport!

Enter FRANTZ *with a bundle.*

FRANTZ.

Mr. Toke, my goot Mr. Toke, I 've brought you von leetel present.

TOKE.

John and Charles, vanish!

[*Exeunt* Servants.

I scorns to corrupt them 'ere working classes!

FRANTZ (*producing a pair of smallclothes, which* TOKE *examines*).

Your master is von beggar! He vants to run avay; ve are all in de same vat-you-call-it—de same leetel nasty boat, Mr. Toke! Just let my friend Mr. Clutch up through the area, and I vill arrest him dis very day.

TOKE.

I accept the abridgments; but you've forgotten to line the pockets!

FRANTZ.

Blesh my soul, so I have! (*giving a note.*)

TOKE.

The area gate shall be left undefended. Do it quietly; no *claw*, as the French say.

FRANTZ.

Goot Mr. Toke — to-morrow I vill line de oter pocket. [*Exit.*

TOKE.

My patron does not give me satisfaction!

Enter Footman.

FOOTMAN.

What chandeliers are to be lighted, Mr. Toke?—it's getting late.

TOKE.

Don't disturb me—I'm rum-mynating!—yes, yes, there's no doubt of it! Charles, the area gate is open?

FOOTMAN.

And all the plate in the pantry! I'll run and—

TOKE.

Not a step! leave it open.

FOOTMAN.

But—

TOKE (*with dignity*).

It 's for the sake of wentilation! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A splendid Saloon in EVELYN*'s house.*

EVELYN, GRAVES.

GRAVES.

You 've withdrawn your money from Flash and Brisk?

EVELYN.

No.

GRAVES.

No!—then—

Enter SIR JOHN, LADY FRANKLIN, *and* GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

You got the cheque for 500*l.* safely?—too happy to—

EVELYN (*interrupting him*).

My best thanks!—my warmest gratitude! So kind in you! so seasonable!—that 500*l.*—you don't know the value of that 500*l.* I shall never forget your nobleness of conduct.

SIR JOHN.

Gratitude! Nobleness!—(*Aside.*) I can't have been taken in?

EVELYN.

And in a moment of such distress!

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Such distress! He picks out the ugliest words in the whole dictionary!

EVELYN.

I've done with Smooth. But I'm still a little crippled, and you must do me *another* favour. I've only as yet paid the deposit of ten per cent. for the great Groginhole property. I am to pay the rest this week—nay, I fear, to-morrow. I've already sold out of the Funds; the money lies at the bankers', and of course I can't touch it; for if I don't pay by a certain day, I forfeit the estate and the deposit.

SIR JOHN.

What's coming now, I wonder?

EVELYN.

Georgina's fortune is 10,000*l.* I always meant, my dear Sir John, to present you with that little sum.

SIR JOHN.

Oh, Evelyn! your generosity is positively touching! (*wipes his eyes.*)

EVELYN.

But the news of my losses has frightened my tradesmen! I have so many heavy debts at this moment that—that—that——. But I see Georgina is listening, and I 'll say what I have to say to her.

SIR JOHN.

No, no—no no. Girls don't understand business!

EVELYN.

The very reason I speak to her. This is an affair, not of business, but of *feeling*. Stout, show Sir John my Correggio.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Devil take his Correggio! The man is born to torment me!

EVELYN.

My dear Georgina, whatever you may hear said of me, I flatter myself that you feel confidence in my honour.

GEORGINA.

Can you doubt it?

EVELYN.

I confess that I am embarrassed at this moment; I have been weak enough to lose money at play, and there

are other demands on me. I promise you never to gamble again as long as I live. My affairs can be retrieved, but for the first few years of our marriage it may be necessary to retrench.

GEORGINA.

Retrench!

EVELYN.

To live perhaps altogether in the country.

GEORGINA.

Altogether in the country!

EVELYN.

To confine ourselves to a modest competence.

GEORGINA.

Modest competence! I knew something horrid was coming!

EVELYN.

And now, Georgina, you may have it in your power at this moment to save me from much anxiety and humiliation. My money is locked up—my debts of honour must be settled—you are of age—your 10,000*l.* in your own hands——

SIR JOHN (STOUT *listening as well as* SIR JOHN).

I 'm standing on hot iron!

EVELYN.

If you could lend it to me for a few weeks——You hesitate! oh! believe the honour of the man you

will call your husband before all the calumnies of the fools whom we call the world! Can you give me this proof of your confidence? Remember, without confidence, what is wedlock?

SIR JOHN (*aside to her*).

No!—(*Aloud, pointing his glass at the Correggio*) Yes, the picture may be fine.

STOUT.

But you don't like the subject?

GEORGINA (*aside*).

He may be only trying me! Best leave it to papa.

EVELYN.

Well——

GEORGINA.

You—you shall hear from me to-morrow.—(*Aside.*) Ah, there 's that dear Sir Frederick!

[*Goes to* BLOUNT.

Enter GLOSSMORE *and* SMOOTH; *Evelyn salutes them, paying* SMOOTH *servile respect.*

LADY FRANKLIN (*to* GRAVES).

Ha! ha! To be so disturbed yesterday,—was it not droll?

GRAVES.

Never recur to that humiliating topic

GLOSSMORE (*to* STOUT).

See how Evelyn fawns upon Smooth!

STOUT.

How mean in him! *Smooth*—a professional gambler—a fellow who lives by his wits! I would not know such a man on any account!

SMOOTH (*to* GLOSSMORE).

So Hopkins is dead—you want Cipher to come in for Groginhole, eh?

GLOSSMORE.

What!—could *you* manage it?

SMOOTH.

Ce cher Charles!—anything to oblige!

STOUT.

Groginhole! What can he have to do with Groginhole? Glossmore, present me to Smooth.

GLOSSMORE.

What! the gambler—the fellow who lives by his wits?

STOUT.

Why, his wits seem to be an uncommonly productive capital! I'll introduce myself. How d'ye do, Captain Smooth? We have met at the club, I think,—I am charmed to make your acquaintance in private. I say, Sir, what do you think of the affairs of the nation? Bad! very bad!—no enlightenment!—great fall off in

the revenue!—no knowledge of finance! There's only one man who can save the country——and that's POPKINS!

SMOOTH.

Is he in parliament, Mr. Stout? What's your Christian name, by the by?

STOUT.

Benjamin.—No; constituencies are so ignorant, they don't understand his value. He's no orator: in fact, he stammers so much—but devilish profound. Could not we ensure him for Groginhole?

SMOOTH.

My dear Benjamin, it's a thing to be thought on.

EVELYN (*advancing*).

My friends—pray be seated;—I wish to consult you. This day twelvemonths I succeeded to an immense income, and as, by a happy coincidence, on the same day I secured your esteem, so now I wish to ask you if you think I could have spent that income in a way more worthy your good opinion.

GLOSSMORE.

Impossible! excellent taste—beautiful house!

BLOUNT.

Vewy good horses—(*aside to* GLOSSMORE) especially the gwey cab!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Splendid pictures!

GRAVES.

And a magnificent cook, ma'am!

SMOOTH (*thrusting his hands in his pockets*).

It 's my opinion, Alfred—and I'm a judge—that you could not have spent your money better!

OMNES (*except* SIR JOHN).

Very true!

EVELYN.

What say *you*, Sir John? You may think me a little extravagant; but you know that in this world the only way to show oneself thoroughly respectable is to make a thoroughly respectable show.

SIR JOHN.

Certainly—certainly!—No, you could not have done better.—(*Aside*) I don't know what to make of it.

GEORGINA.

Certainly.—(*Coaxingly.*) Don't retrench, my dear Alfred!

GLOSSMORE.

Retrench! nothing so plebeian!

STOUT.

Plebeian, sir!—worse than plebeian!—it is against all the rules of public morality. Every one knows, now-a-days, that extravagance is a benefit to the population —encourages art — employs labour — and multiplies spinning-jennies.

EVELYN.

You reassure me!—I own I did think that a man worthy of friends so sincere might have done something better than feast—dress—drink—play—

GLOSSMORE.

Nonsense!—we like you the better for it.—(*Aside.*) I wish I had my 600*l.* back, though.

EVELYN.

And you are as much my friends now as when you offered me 10*l.* for my old nurse.

SIR JOHN.

A thousand times more so, my dear boy!

[*Omnes approve.*

Enter SHARP.

SMOOTH.

But who 's our new friend?

EVELYN.

Who! the very man who first announced to me the wealth which you allow I have spent so well. But what 's the matter, Sharp?

SHARP (*whispering* EVELYN).

EVELYN (*aloud*).

The bank 's *broke!*

SIR JOHN.

Broke!—what bank?

EVELYN.

Flash, Brisk, and Co.

GLOSSMORE (*to* Smooth).

And Flash was your brother-in-law. I'm very sorry.

SMOOTH (*taking snuff*).

Not at all, Charles,—I did not bank there.

SIR JOHN.

But I warned you—you withdrew?

EVELYN.

Alas! no!

SIR JOHN.

Oh!—Not much in their hands?

EVELYN.

Why, I told you the purchase-money for Groginhole was at my bankers'——But no, no: don't look so frightened! It was not placed with Flash—it is at Hoare's—it is, indeed. Nay, I assure you it is! A mere trifle at Flash's—upon my word, now! To-morrow, Sharp, we 'll talk of this! One day more—one day, at least, for enjoyment!

SIR JOHN.

Oh! a pretty enjoyment!

BLOUNT.

And he borrowed 700*l.* of me!

GLOSSMORE.

And 600*l.* of me!

SIR JOHN.

And 500*l.* of me!

STOUT.

Oh! a regular Jeremy Diddler!

SMOOTH (*to* SIR JOHN).

John, do you know, I think I would take a handsome offer for this house just as it stands—furniture, plate, pictures, books, bronzes, and statues!

SIR JOHN.

Powers above!

STOUT (*to* SIR JOHN).

I say, you have placed your daughter in a very unsafe investment. What then?—a daughter 's like any other capital—transfer the stock in hand to t' other speculation.

SIR JOHN (*going to* GEORGINA).

Ha! I 'm afraid we 've been very rude to Sir Frederick. A monstrous fine young man!

Enter TOKE.

TOKE (*to* EVELYN).

Sir, I beg your pardon, but Mr. Macfinch insists on my giving you this letter instantly.

EVELYN (*reading*).

How! Sir John, this fellow, Macfinch, has heard of my misfortunes, and insists on being paid;—a lawyer's letter—quite insolent!

TOKE.

And, Sir, Mr. Tabouret is below, and declares he won't stir till he 's paid.

EVELYN.

Won't stir till he 's paid! What 's to be done, Sir John?—Smooth, what *is* to be done?

SMOOTH.

If he won't stir till he 's paid, make him up a bed, and I 'll take him in the inventory as one of the fixtures, Alfred!

EVELYN.

It is very well for you to joke, Mr. Smooth. But—

Enter Sheriff's-Officer, *giving a paper to* Evelyn, *and whispering.*

EVELYN.

What 's this? Frantz, the tailor. Why, you impudent scoundrel! Faith! this is more than I bargained for—Sir John, I 'm arrested.

STOUT (*slapping* Sir John *on the back with glee*).

He 's arrested, old gentleman! But I didn't lend him a farthing.

EVELYN.

And for a mere song—150*l.*! Sir John, pay this fellow, will you? or bail me, or something,—while we go to dinner!

SIR JOHN.

Pay—bail—I'll be d——d if I do!—Oh, my 500*l.*! my 500*l.*! Mr. Alfred Evelyn, I want my 500*l.*!

GRAVES.

I 'm going to do a very silly thing—I shall lose both my friend and my money;—just like my luck!—Evelyn, go to dinner—I 'll settle this for you.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I love you for that!

GRAVES.

Do you? then I am the happiest—Ah! ma'am, I don't know what I am saying!

[*Exeunt* GRAVES *and* Officer.

EVELYN (*to* GEORGINA).

Don't go by these appearances! I repeat, 10,000*l.* will more than cover all my embarrassments. I shall hear from you to-morrow?

GEORGINA.

Yes—yes!

EVELYN.

But you 're not going?—You, too, Glossmore?—you, Blount?—you, Stout?—you, Smooth?

SMOOTH.

No; I 'll stick by you—as long as you 've a guinea to stake!

GLOSSMORE.

Oh, this might have been expected from a man of such ambiguous political opinions!

STOUT.

Don't stop me, Sir. No man of common enlightenment would have squandered his substance in this way. Pictures and statues!—baugh!

EVELYN.

Why, you all said I could not spend my money better! Ha! ha! ha!—the absurdest mistake!—you don't fancy I 'm going to prison?—Ha! ha!—Why don't you laugh, Sir John?—Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Sir, this horrible levity!—Take Sir Frederick's arm, my poor injured, innocent child!—Mr. Evelyn, after this extraordinary scene, you can't be surprised that I—I—Zounds! I 'm suffocating!

SMOOTH.

But, my dear John, they 've no right to arrest the dinner!

STOUT (*aside*).

But the election at Groginhole is to-morrow. This news may not arrive before the poll closes!—(*rushing to* EVELYN) Sir, Popkins never bribes: but Popkins will bet you 1000*l.* that he don't come in for Groginhole.

GLOSSMORE.

This is infamous, Mr. Stout! Cipher is a man who scorns every subterfuge!—(*aside to* EVELYN) But, for the sake of the Constitution, name your price.

EVELYN.

I know the services of Cipher—I know the profundity of Popkins: but it 's too late—the borough 's engaged!

TOKE.

Dinner is served.

GLOSSMORE (*pausing*).

Dinner!

STOUT.

Dinner!—it 's a very good smell!

EVELYN (*to* SIR JOHN).

Turtle and venison too!

[*They stop irresolute.*

EVELYN.

That 's right—come along. But, I say, Blount—Stout—Glossmore—Sir John—one word first: will you lend me 10*l.* for my old nurse?

[*Exeunt omnes, indignantly.*

SMOOTH *and* EVELYN.

Ha! ha! ha!

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

** * * * *'s Club;* SMOOTH, GLOSSMORE—*other Members.*

GLOSSMORE.

Will his horses be sold, think you?

SMOOTH,

Very possibly, Charles!—a fine stud—hum! ha! Waiter, a glass of sherry!

GLOSSMORE.

They say he must go abroad!

SMOOTH.

Well! it's the best time of year for travelling, Charles.

GLOSSMORE.

We are all to be paid to-day; and that looks suspicious!

SMOOTH.

Very suspicious, Charles! Hum!—ah!

GLOSSMORE.

My dear fellow, you must know the rights of the

matter: I wish you 'd speak out. What have you really won? Is the house itself gone?

SMOOTH.

The house itself is certainly not gone, Charles, for I saw it exactly in the same place this morning at half past ten—it has not moved an inch!

[Waiter *gives a letter to* GLOSSMORE.

GLOSSMORE (*reading*).

From Groginhole—an express! What 's this? I 'm amazed!!! (*Reading.*) "They 've actually at the eleventh hour started Mr. Evelyn; and nobody knows what his politics are! We shall be *beat!*—the constitution is gone!—Cipher!" Oh! this is infamous in Evelyn! Gets into parliament just to keep himself out of the Bench.

SMOOTH.

He 's capable of it!

GLOSSMORE.

Not a doubt of it, Sir!—not a doubt of it!

Enter SIR JOHN *and* BLOUNT, *talking.*

SIR JOHN.

My dear boy, I 'm not flint! I am but a man! if Georgina really loves you—and I am sure that she *does*—I will never think of sacrificing her happiness to ambition—she is yours; I told her so this very morning.

BLOUNT.

The old humbug!

SIR JOHN.

She 's the best of daughters!—the most obedient artless creature! Oh! she 's been properly brought up: a good daughter makes a good wife. Dine with me at seven, and we 'll talk of the settlements.

BLOUNT.

Yes; I don't care for fortune; but—

SIR JOHN.

Her 10,000*l.* will be settled on herself—that of course.

BLOUNT.

All of it, Sir? Weally I—

SIR JOHN.

What *then,* my dear boy? I shall leave you both all I 've laid by. Ah! you know I 'm a close fellow! "Stingy Jack"—eh? After all, worth makes the man!

SMOOTH.

And the more a man's worth, John, the worthier man he must be! [*Exit.*

BLOUNT (*aside*).

Yes; he has no other child! She *must* have all his savings; I don't see what harm it could do me. Still that 10,000*l.*—I want that 10,000*l.*: if she would but run off now, one could get rid of the settlements.

Enter STOUT (*wiping his forehead*), *and takes* SIR JOHN *aside.*

STOUT.

Sir John, we 've been played upon! My secretary is brother to Flash's head clerk; Evelyn had not 300*l.* in the bank!

SIR JOHN.

Bless us and save us! you take away my breath! But then—Deadly Smooth—the arrest—the—oh, he must be done up!

STOUT.

As to Smooh, he 'd "do anything to oblige." All a trick, depend on it! Smooth has already deceived me, for before the day 's over Evelyn will be member for Groginhole. I 've had an express from Popkins; he 's in despair! not for *himself*—but for the *country,* Sir John—what 's to become of the country?

SIR JOHN.

But what could be Evelyn's *object?*

STOUT.

Object? Do you look for an object in a whimsical creature like that? A man who has not even any political opinions! Object! Perhaps to break off his match with your daughter! Take care, Sir John, or the borough will be lost to your family!

SIR JOHN.

Aha! I begin to smell a rat! But it 's not too late yet.

STOUT.

My interest in Popkins made me run to Lord Spendquick, the late proprietor of Groginhole. I told him that Evelyn could not pay the rest of the money; and *he* told me that—

SIR JOHN.

What?

STOUT.

Mr. Sharp had just paid it him; there's no hope for Popkins! England will rue this day!

SIR JOHN.

Georgina shall lend him the money! *I'll* lend him—every man in my house shall lend him—I feel again what it is to be a father-in-law!—(*Aside.*) But stop; I'll be cautious. Stout may be on his side—a trap—not likely; but I'll go first to Spendquick myself. Sir Frederick, excuse me—you can't dine with me to-day. And, on second thoughts, I see that it would be very unhandsome to desert poor Evelyn now he's down in the world. Can't think of it, my dear boy—can't think of it. Very much honoured, and happy to see you as a friend. Waiter! my carriage! Um! What, humbug *Stingy Jack*, will they? Ah! a good joke, indeed! [*Exit.*

BLOUNT.

Mr. Stout, what have you been saying to Sir John? Something against my character; I know you have; don't deny it. Sir, I shall expect satisfaction!

STOUT.

Satisfaction, Sir Frederick? as if a man of enlightenment had any satisfaction in fighting! Did not mention your name; we were talking of Evelyn. Only think!—he 's no more ruined than you are.

BLOUNT.

Not wuined? Aha, now I understand!—So, so! Stay, let me see—she 's to meet me in the square! (*pulls out his watch; a very small one.*)

STOUT (*pulling out his own; a very large one*)

I must be off to the vestry.

BLOUNT.

Just in time!—ten thousand pounds! Gad, my blood 's up, and I won't be tweated in *this* way, if he were fifty times Stingy Jack! [*Exit*

SCENE II.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY*'s house.*

LADY FRANKLIN, GRAVES.

GRAVES.

Well, well, I am certain that poor Evelyn loves Clara still: but you can't persuade me that she cares for him.

LADY FRANKLIN.

She has been breaking her heart ever since she heard of his distress. Nay, I am sure she would give all she has could it save him from the consequences of his own folly.

GRAVES (*half aside*).

She would only give him his own money, if she did. I should like just to sound her.

LADY FRANKLIN (*ringing the bell*).

And you shall. I take so much interest in her that I forgive your friend everything but his offer to Georgina.

Enter Servant.

Where are the young ladies?

SERVANT.

Miss Vesey is, I believe, still in the square: Miss Douglas is just come in, my lady.

LADY FRANKLIN.

What, did not she go out with Miss Vesey?

SERVANT.

No, my lady; I attended her to Drummond's, the banker. [*Exit.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

Drummond's!

Enter Clara.

Why, child, what on earth could take you to Drummond's at this hour of the day?

CLARA (*confused*).

Oh, I——that is—I—Ah, Mr. Graves! How is

Mr. Evelyn? How does he bear up against so sudden a reverse?

GRAVES.

With an awful calm. I fear all is not right here! (*touching his head.*)—The report in the town is, that he must go abroad instantly—perhaps to-day!

CLARA.

Abroad!—to-day!

GRAVES.

But all his creditors will be paid; and he only seems anxious to know if Miss Vesey remains true in his misfortunes.

CLARA.

Ah! he loves her so *much*, then!

GRAVES.

Um!—That 's more than I can say.

CLARA.

She told me, last night, that he said to the last that 10,000*l.* would free him from all his liabilities—that was the sum, was it not?

GRAVES.

Yes; he persists in the same assertion. Will Miss Vesey lend it?

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

If she does I shall not think so well of her poor dear mother; for I am sure she 'd be no child of Sir John's!

GRAVES.

I should like to convince myself that my poor friend has nothing to hope from a woman's generosity.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Civil! And are men, then, less covetous?

GRAVES.

I know one man, at least, who, rejected in his poverty by one as poor as himself, no sooner came into a sudden fortune than he made his lawyer invent a codicil which the testator never dreamt of, bequeathing independence to the woman who had scorned him.

LADY FRANKLIN.

And never told her?

GRAVES.

Never! There's no such document at Doctors' Commons, depend on it! You seem incredulous, Miss Clara! Good day!

CLARA (*following him*).

One word, for mercy's sake! Do I understand you right? Ah, how could I be so blind! Generous Evelyn!

GRAVES.

You appreciate, and *Georgina* will desert him. Miss Douglas, he loves you still.——If that's not just like me! Meddling with other people's affairs, as if they were worth it—hang them! [*Exit.*

CLARA.

Georgina will desert him. Do you think so?—(*Aside.*) Ah, he will soon discover that she never wrote that letter!

LADY FRANKLIN.

She told me, last night, that she would never see him again. To do her justice, she's less interested than her father,—and as much attached as she can be to another. Even while engaged to Evelyn she has met Sir Frederick every day in the square.

CLARA.

And he is alone—sad—forsaken—ruined. And I, whom he enriched—I, the creature of his bounty—I, once the woman of his love—I stand idly here to content myself with tears and prayers! Oh, Lady Franklin, have pity on me—on him! We are both of kin to him—as relations we have both a right to comfort! Let us go to him—come!

LADY FRANKLIN.

No! it would scarcely be right — remember the world—I cannot.

CLARA.

All abandon him—then I will go alone!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You!—so proud—so sensitive!

CLARA.

Pride—when he wants a friend?

LADY FRANKLIN.

His misfortunes are his own fault—a gambler!

CLARA.

Can you think of his faults now? *I* have no right to do so. All I have—all—his gift!—and I never to have dreamed it!

LADY FRANKLIN.

But if Georgina do indeed release him—if she has already done so—what will he think? What but—

CLARA.

What but—that, if he love me still, I may have enough for both, and I am by his side! But that is too bright a dream. He told me I might call him brother! Where, now, should a sister be?——But—but—I—I—I tremble! If, after all—if—if——In one word—Am I too bold? The world—my conscience can answer *that*—but do you think that HE could despise me?

LADY FRANKLIN.

No, Clara, no! Your fair soul is too transparent for even libertines to misconstrue. Something tells me that this meeting may make the happiness of both! You cannot go alone. My presence justifies all. Give me your hand—we will go together!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A room in EVELYN*'s house.*

EVELYN.

Yes; as yet, all surpasses my expectations. I am sure of Smooth—I have managed even Sharp; my election will seem but an escape from a prison. Ha! ha! True, it cannot last long; but a few hours more are all I require, and for that time at least I shall hope to be thoroughly ruined.

Enter GRAVES.

Well, Graves, and what do people say of me?

GRAVES.

Everything that's bad!

EVELYN.

Three days ago I was universally respected. I awake this morning to find myself singularly infamous. Yet I'm the same man.

GRAVES.

Humph! why gambling——

EVELYN.

Cant! it was not criminal to gamble—it was criminal to lose. Tut!—will you deny that, if I had ruined Smooth instead of myself, every hand would have grasped mine yet more cordially, and every lip would

have smiled congratulation on my success? Man—Man! I've not been rich and poor for nothing! The Vices and the Virtues are written in a language the World cannot construe; it reads them in a vile translation, and the translators are—Failure and Success! You alone are unchanged.

GRAVES.

There's no merit in that. I am always ready to mingle my tears with any man. (*Aside*) I know I'm a fool, but I can't help it. Hark ye, Evelyn! I like you—I'm rich; and anything I can do to get you out of your hobble will give me an excuse to grumble for the rest of my life. There, now it's out.

EVELYN (*touched*).

There's something good in human nature after all! My dear friend, did I want your aid I would accept it, but I can extricate myself yet. Do you think Georgina will give me the same proof of confidence and affection?

GRAVES.

Would you break your heart if she did not?

EVELYN.

It is in vain to deny that I still love Clara; our last conversation renewed feelings which would task all the energies of my soul to conquer. What then? I am not one of those, the Sybarites of sentiment, who deem it impossible for humanity to conquer love—who call their own weakness the voice of a resistless destiny.

Such is the poor excuse of every woman who yields her honour, of every adulterer who betrays his friend. No! the heart was given to the soul as its ally, not as its traitor.

GRAVES.

What do you tend to?

EVELYN.

This:—If Georgina still adheres to my fortunes (and I will not put her to too harsh a trial), if she can face the prospect, not of ruin and poverty, for reports wrong me there, but of a moderate independence; if, in one word, she love me for myself, I will shut Clara for ever from my thought. I am pledged to Georgina, and I will carry to the altar a soul resolute to deserve her affection and fulfil its vows.

GRAVES.

And if she reject you?

EVELYN (*joyfully*).

If she do, I am free once more! And then—then I will dare to ask, for I can ask without dishonour, if Clara can explain the past and bless the future!

Enter Servant *with a letter.*

EVELYN (*after reading it*).

The die is cast—the dream is over! Generous girl! Oh, Georgina! I will deserve you yet.

GRAVES.

Georgina, is it possible?

EVELYN.

And the delicacy, the womanhood, the exquisite grace of this! How we misjudge the depth of the human heart! How, seeing the straws on the surface, we forget that the pearls may lie hid below!* I imagined her incapable of this devotion.

GRAVES.

And *I too!*

EVELYN.

It were base in me to continue this trial a moment longer: I will write at once to undeceive that generous heart (*writing*).

GRAVES.

I would have given 1000*l.* if that little jade Clara had been beforehand: but just like my luck! if I want a man to marry one woman, he 's sure to marry another on purpose to vex me! [Evelyn *rings the bell.*

Enter Servant.

EVELYN.

Take this instantly to Miss Vesey; say I will call in an hour. (*Exit* Servant.) And now Clara is resigned for ever! Why does my heart sink within me? Why, why, looking to the fate to come, do I see only the memory of what has been?

GRAVES.

You are re-engaged then to Georgina!

EVELYN.

Irrevocably.

* "Errors, like straws," &c.

SCENE IV.

Enter Servant, *announcing* LADY FRANKLIN *and* MISS DOUGLAS.——EVELYN, GRAVES.

LADY FRANKLIN.

My dear Evelyn, you may think it strange to receive such visitors at this moment; but, indeed, it is no time for ceremony. We are your relations—it is reported you are about to leave the country—we come to ask frankly what we can do to serve you?

EVELYN.

Madam—I——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Come, come—do not hesitate to confide in us; Clara is less a stranger to you than I am: your friend here will perhaps let me consult with him.—(*Aside to* GRAVES.) Let us leave them to themselves.

GRAVES.

You 're an angel of a widow; but you come too late, as whatever is good for anything generally does.

[*They retire into the inner room, which should be partially open.*

EVELYN.

Miss Douglas, I may well want words to thank you; this goodness—this sympathy—

CLARA (*abandoning herself to her emotion*).

Evelyn! Evelyn! Do not talk thus!—Goodness! sympathy!—I have learned *all—all!* It is for ME to

speak of *gratitude!* What! even when I had so wounded you—when you believed me mercenary and cold—when you thought that I was blind and base enough not to know you for what you are;—even *at that time* you thought but of my happiness—my fortunes—my fate!—And to you—you—I owe all that has raised the poor orphan from servitude and dependence! While your words were so bitter, your deeds so gentle! Oh, noble Evelyn, this, then, was your revenge!

EVELYN.

You owe me no thanks; that revenge was sweet! Think you it was nothing to feel that my presence haunted you, though you knew it not?—that in things, the pettiest as the greatest, which that gold could buy—the very jewels you wore—the very robe in which, to other eyes, you might seem more fair—in all in which you took the woman's young and innocent delight—*I* had a part—a share? that even if separated for ever—even if another's—even in distant years—perhaps in a happy home, listening to sweet voices, that might call you "mother!"—even then should the uses of that dross bring to your lips one smile—that smile was mine—due to me—due, as a sacred debt, to the hand that you rejected—to the love that you despised!

CLARA.

Despised! See the proof that I despised you!—see: in this hour, when they say you are again as poor as before, I forget the world—my pride—perhaps too

much my sex: I remember but your sorrow—I am here!

EVELYN (*aside*).

O, Heaven! give me strength to bear it!—(*Aloud.*) And is this the same voice that, when I knelt at your feet—when I asked but *one day* the hope to call you mine—spoke only of poverty, and answered, "*Never?*"

CLARA.

Because I had been unworthy of your love if I had ensured your misery. Evelyn, hear me! My father, like you, was poor—generous; gifted, like you, with genius—ambition; sensitive, like you, to the least breath of insult. He married, as you would have done—married one whose only dower was penury and care! Alfred, I saw that genius the curse to itself!—I saw that ambition wither to despair!—I saw the struggle—the humiliation—the proud man's agony—the bitter life—the early death!—and heard over his breathless clay my mother's groan of self-reproach! Alfred Evelyn, now speak! Was the woman you loved so nobly to repay you with such a doom?

EVELYN.

Clara, we should have shared it!

CLARA.

Shared? Never let the woman who really loves comfort her selfishness with such delusion! In marriages like this the wife cannot share the burden; it is he—the husband—to provide, to scheme, to work, to

endure—to grind out his strong heart at the miserable wheel! The wife, alas, cannot share the struggle—she can but witness the despair! And, therefore, Alfred, I rejected you.

EVELYN.

Yet you believe me as poor now as I was then.

CLARA.

But *I* am not poor; *we* are not so poor! Of this fortune, which is all your own—if, as I hear, one-half would free you from your debts, why, *we have the other half still left*, Evelyn! It is humble—but it is not penury.

EVELYN.

Cease, cease—you know not how you torture me. Oh, that when hope was possible!—oh, that you had bid me take it to my breast and wait for a brighter day

CLARA.

And so have consumed your life of life upon a hope perhaps delayed till age—shut you from a happier choice, from fairer fortunes—shackled you with vows that, as my youth and its poor attributes decayed, would only have irritated and galled—made your whole existence one long suspence! No, Alfred, even *yet* you do not know me!

EVELYN.

Know you! Fair angel, too excellent for man's harder nature to understand!—at least it is permitted me to revere. Why were such blessed words not vouch-

safed to me before?—why, why come they now—too late? Oh, Heaven—too late!

CLARA.

Too late! What, then, have I said?

EVELYN.

Wealth! what is it without you? *With* you, I recognise its power; to forestall your every wish—to smooth your every path—to make all that life borrows from Grace and Beauty your ministrant and handmaid; and then, looking to those eyes, to read there the treasures of a heart that excelled all that kings could lavish;—why *that* were to make gold indeed a god! But vain—vain—vain! Bound by every tie of faith, gratitude, loyalty, and honour, to another!

CLARA.

Another! Is she, then, true to your reverses? I did not know this—indeed, I did not! And I have thus betrayed myself! O, shame! he must despise me now!

SCENE V.

The foregoing.—Enter SIR JOHN; *at the same time* GRAVES *and* LADY FRANKLIN *advance from the inner room.*

SIR JOHN (*with dignity and frankness*).

Evelyn, I was hasty yesterday. You must own it natural that I should be so. But Georgina has been so urgent in your defence, that——(*as* LADY FRANKLIN *comes up to listen*) Sister, just shut the door, will you?

——that I cannot resist her. What's money without happiness? So give me your security; for she insists on lending you the 10,000*l.*

EVELYN.

I know; and have already received it.

SIR JOHN.

Already received it! Is he joking? Faith, for the last two days I believe I have been living amongst the Mysteries of Udolpho! Sister, have you seen Georgina?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Not since she went out to walk in the square.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

She's not in the square nor the house—where the deuce can the girl be?

EVELYN.

I have written to Miss Vesey—I have asked her to fix the day for our wedding.

SIR JOHN (*joyfully*).

Have you? Go, Lady Franklin, find her instantly—she must be back by this time: take my carriage, it is but a step—you won't be two minutes gone.—(*Aside*) I'd go myself, but I'm afraid of leaving him a moment while he's in such excellent dispositions.

LADY FRANKLIN (*repulsing* Clara).

No, no: stay till I return. [*Exit.*

SIR JOHN.

And don't be downhearted, my dear fellow; if the worst come to the worst, you will have everything I can leave you. Meantime, if I can in any way help you——

EVELYN.

Ha!—you!—*you*, too? Sir John, you have seen my letter to Miss Vesey? (*aside*) or could she have learned the truth before she ventured to be generous?

SIR JOHN.

No; on my honour. I only just called at the door on my way from Lord Spend—— that is, from the City. Georgina was out;—was ever anything so unlucky?—(*Without*) [Hurrah—hurrah! Blue for ever!]—What 's that?

Enter SHARP.

SHARP.

Sir, a Deputation from Groginhole—poll closed in the first hour—you are returned! Hollow, Sir—hollow!

EVELYN.

And it was to please Clara!

SIR JOHN.

Mr. Sharp,—Mr. Sharp,—I say, how much has Mr. Evelyn lost by Messrs. Flash and Co.

SHARP.

Oh, a great deal, Sir,—a great deal.

SIR JOHN (*alarmed*).

How!—a great deal!

EVELYN.

Speak the truth, Sharp,—concealment is all over.

SHARP.

223*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.*—a great sum to throw away.

GRAVES.

Ah, I comprehend now! Poor Evelyn, caught in his own trap!

SIR JOHN.

Eh! what, my dear boy?—what? Ha! ha! all humbug, was it?—all humbug, upon my soul! So, Mr. Sharp, isn't he ruined after all?—not the least, wee, rascally, little bit in the world, ruined?

SHARP.

Sir, he has never even lived up to his income.

SIR JOHN.

Worthy man! I could jump up to the ceiling! I am the happiest father-in-law in the three kingdoms.—And that 's my sister's knock too.

CLARA.

Since I was mistaken, cousin,—since, now, you do not need me,—forget what has passed; my business here is over. Farewell!

EVELYN.

Could you but see my heart at this moment, with what love, what veneration, what anguish it is filled, you would know how little, in the great calamities of

life, fortune is really worth. And must we part now, —*now*, when—when——I never wept before, since my mother died!

Enter LADY FRANKLIN *and* GEORGINA, *followed by* BLOUNT, *who looks shy and embarrassed.*

GRAVES.

Georgina herself—then there's no hope.

SIR JOHN.

What the deuce brings that fellow Blount here?—Georgy, my dear Georgy, I want to——

EVELYN.

Stand back, Sir John.

SIR JOHN.

But I must speak a word to her—I want to——

EVELYN.

Stand back, I say,—not a whisper—not a sign. If your daughter is to be my wife, to *her* heart only will I look for a reply to *mine*.

LADY FRANKLIN (*to* GEORGINA).

Speak the truth, niece.

EVELYN.

Georgina, it is true, then, that you trust me with your confidence—your fortune. Is it also true that, when you did so, you believed me ruined? O pardon the doubt! Answer as if your father stood not

there—answer me from that truth the world cannot yet have plucked from your soul—answer as if the woe or weal of a life trembled in the balance—answer as the woman's heart, yet virgin and unpolluted, *should* answer to one who has trusted to it his all!

GEORGINA.

What can he mean?

SIR JOHN (*making signs*).

She won't look this way, she won't!—hang her —Hem!

EVELYN.

You falter. I implore—I adjure you—answer!

LADY FRANKLIN.

The truth!

GEORGINA.

Mr. Evelyn; your fortune might well dazzle me, as it dazzled others. Believe me, I sincerely pity your reverses.

SIR JOHN.

Good girl: you hear her, Evelyn?

GEORGINA.

What 's money without happiness?

SIR JOHN.

Clever creature!—my own sentiments!

GEORGINA.

And, so, as our engagement is now annulled,—papa told me so this very morning,—I have promised my hand where I have given my heart—to Sir Frederick Blount.

SIR JOHN

I told you,—I? No such thing—no such thing: you frighten her out of her wits—she don't know what she 's saying.

EVELYN.

Am I awake? But this letter—this letter, received to-day——

LADY FRANKLIN (*looking over the letter*).

Drummond's!—from a banker!

EVELYN.

Read—read.

LADY FRANKLIN.

"Ten thousand pounds just placed to your account—from the same unknown friend to Alfred Evelyn." Oh, Clara, I know now why you went to Drummond's this morning!

EVELYN.

Clara! What!—and the former one with the same signature—on the faith of which I pledged my hand and sacrificed my heart——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Was written under my eyes, and the secret kept that—

EVELYN.

Look up, look up, Clara—I am free!—I am released! you forgive me?—you love me?—you are mine! We are rich—rich! I can give you fortune, power,—I can devote to you my whole life, thought, heart, soul—I am all yours, Clara—my own—my wife!

SIR JOHN.

A pretty mess you 've made of it, to humbug your own father! And you, too, Lady Franklin—I am to thank you for this!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You 've to thank me that she 's not now on the road to Scotland with Sir Frederick; I chanced on them by the Park just in time to dissuade and save her. But, to do her justice, a hint of your displeasure was sufficient.

GEORGINA (*half sobbing*).

And you know, papa, you said this very morning that poor Frederick had been very ill used, and you would settle it all at the club.

BLOUNT.

Come, Sir John, you can only blame yourself and Evelyn's cunning device! After all I 'm no such vewy bad match; and as for the 10,000*l.*——

EVELYN.

I 'll double it. Ah, Sir John, what's money without happiness?

SIR JOHN.

Pshaw—nonsense—stuff! Don't humbug me.

LADY FRANKLIN.

But if you don't consent, she 'll have no husband at all.

SIR JOHN.

Hum! there's something in that.—(*Aside to Evelyn*) Double it, will you? Then settle it all *tightly* on her. Well—well—my foible is not avarice. Blount, make her happy. Child, I forgive you.—(*Pinching her arm*) Ugh, you fool!

GRAVES (*to* LADY FRANKLIN).

I 'm afraid it's catching. What say you? I feel the symptoms of matrimony creeping all over me. Shall we? eh? Shall we? Frankly, now, frankly——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Frankly, now, there 's my hand, on one condition,—that we finish our reel on the wedding-day.

GRAVES.

Accepted. Is it possible? Sainted Maria! thank Heaven you are spared this affliction.

Enter SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

How d' ye do, Alfred?—I intrude, I fear! Quite a family party.

BLOUNT.

Wish us joy, Smooth—Georgina 's mine, and—

SMOOTH.

And our four friends there, apparently have made up another rubber. John, my dear boy, you look as if you had something at stake on the odd trick.

SIR JOHN.

Sir, you're very——Confound the fellow!—and he's a dead shot too!

Enter STOUT *and* GLOSSMORE *hastily, talking with each other.*

STOUT.

I'm sure he's of our side; we've all the intelligence.

GLOSSMORE.

I'm sure he's of ours if his fortune is safe, for we've all the property.

STOUT.

Just heard of your return, Evelyn! Congratulate you. The great motion of the session is fixed for Friday. We count on your vote. Progress with the times!

GLOSSMORE.

Preserve the Constitution!

STOUT.

Your money will do wonders for the party!—Advance!

GLOSSMORE.

The party respects men of your property! Stick fast!

EVELYN.

I have the greatest respect, I assure you, for the worthy and intelligent flies upon both sides the wheel; but whether we go too fast or too slow does not, I fancy, depend so much on the flies as on the Stout Gentleman who sits inside and pays the post-boys. Now all my politics as yet is to consider what 's best for the Stout Gentleman!

SMOOTH.

Meaning John Bull. *Ce cher* old John!

STOUT.

I 'm as wise as I was before.

GLOSSMORE.

Sir, he 's a trimmer!

EVELYN.

Smooth, we have yet to settle our first piquet account, nd our last! And I sincerely thank you for the ser- ice you have rendered to me, and the lesson you have iven these gentlemen.—(*Turning to* CLARA.) Ah, Clara, you—you have succeeded where wealth had ailed! You have reconciled me to the world and to ankind. My friends—we must confess it—amidst the umours and the follies, the vanities, deceits, and vices at play their part in the Great Comedy of Life—it is ur own fault if we do not find such natures, though rare nd few, as redeem the rest, brightening the shadows at are flung from the form and body of the TIME with limpses of the everlasting holiness of truth and love.

GRAVES.

But for the truth and the love, when found, to make us tolerably happy, we should not be without——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Good health ;

GRAVES.

Good spirits ;

CLARA.

A good heart ;

SMOOTH.

An innocent rubber ;

GEORGINA.

Congenial tempers ;

BLOUNT.

A pwoper degwee of pwudence ;

STOUT.

Enlightened opinions ;

GLOSSMORE.

Constitutional principles ;

SIR JOHN.

Knowledge of the world ;

EVELYN.

And——plenty of Money !

THE END.

THE

DAUGHTER.

A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,
AUTHOR OF "VIRGINIUS," "THE HUNCHBACK," &c.

Second Edition.

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MDCCCXXXVII.

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WHITEFRIARS.

TO

JOHN GARDNER, ESQ.

(LATE OF GLASGOW, NOW OF APALACHICOLA, IN WEST FLORIDA.)

My dear John,

Accept the Dedication of this Play, as a small acknowledgment of a large debt of Friendship.

Yours gratefully,

and affectionately,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

London,
29th November, 1836.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The subject of this play was suggested to me by my son, Richard Brinsley. My friend, Mr. Stephen Price, to stimulate me, defied me to produce it by a certain time. When I had finished the second scene, I lost confidence in my subject; and had determined to select a new one—but finding that some of the passages had made a powerful impression upon a friend, on whose taste I had great reliance, I resumed my work; and here it is, to the discomforture, yet gratification of my generous challenger.

CHARACTERS.

ROBERT	Father to Marian.	*Mr. Knowles.*
NORRIS		*Mr. Warde.*
WOLF	Friend to Norris.	*Mr. Diddear.*
EDWARD	In love with Marian.	*Mr. Cooper.*
CLERGYMAN		*Mr. Matthews.*
PHILIP, AMBROSE, STEPHEN	Wreckers.	*Mr. Baker.*, *Mr. F. Cooke.*, *Mr. Brindal.*
JAILOR		*Mr. Henry.*
CONSTABLE		*Mr. Fenton.*
BAILIFF		*Mr. Mears.*
MARIAN	In love with Edward.	*Miss Huddart.*

SCENE—*The Coast of Cornwall.*

THE DAUGHTER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE SHORE, ON THE COAST OF CORNWALL.

Enter PHILIP, AMBROSE, *and others.*

PHILIP.

Our craft is scandaliz'd! We strip the dead!
But what of that? The dead but want a grave!
We give it them; we take what they can spare.

AMBROSE.

You're right; we do no more!

PHILIP.

As to the rights
Of the living, whom they leave behind, let men
Look to their own! If not, why let it go!
Is it for us to stand the drenching rain!
Wade to our necks into the sea! perhaps
Take boat and pull among the breakers, at
The peril, every moment, of our lives,

For their behoof, while they lie snug in bed ;
Loll o'er their fires, or sit around their feasts ?
Methinks there's reason in the wrecker's trade !

AMBROSE.

There is. He risks, and toils for what he gets.

PHILIP.

But then he does no mischief to the dead,
More than the waves have done !—and if there be
Among us, one that does, he 's not of us.
Those marks of violence, which hands alone,
Not rocks, and waves, that have not hands, can leave,
Are scandal to our name !

AMBROSE.

'Tis clear, foul play
Has oft of late been done, and chiefly there (*Enter* NORRIS.)
Where Norris takes his stand ! What right has he
To make that reef his own ?

NORRIS.

Who talks of me ?
What of Black Norris ?—Humph !—You envy him !
" What right has he to make that reef his own ? "
The right you all would stand on if you could—
The right of might !

PHILIP.

Who thought of seeing him ?
Who dream'd that he was near ?

NORRIS.

I am a dark
And surly man !—Am I the worse for that ?
May not the heart that's here be soft as yours ?

The man that's ever smiling, still speaks soft—
And no one here would pass for such a man—
I'd never trust! He'll prove a hypocrite!
The sky doth change its 'haviour—'tis no rogue;
And why not man that lives beneath the sky,
If he be honest? Marks of violence
On bodies washed ashore! You want to know
How they came there? I'll tell you—Why by hands!
Is not that frank?—I'll tell you something more—
'Twas not by mine. It follows not, because
The hair is rough, the dog's a savage one!

AMBROSE.

'Tis true.

NORRIS.

Come, come, hang no man for his looks!
The thing's disgrace! Let's put a stop to it;
And each man do his best, to find him out,
That brings the shame upon us—be it me,
Or you, or him, or whomsoe'er it may;
And hunt him not by looks! Such hounds—you know
What hounds are, I suppose—are oft at fault!
Sleek looks may be companions of rough heart!
I have found it many a time! As for the reef
You say I make my own—you're welcome to it!
But take it if you dare. (*Aside, and exit.*)

AMBROSE.

We've done him wrong.

PHILIP.

I know not.

AMBROSE.

Think the best! Come; in the end
It may be as he says. Whate'er we've thought,
No guilt has been brought home to him—although
His father is no better than he should be,
And sees far lands, by favour of the law.
Let's keep awake! Each think the watch his own!
Whispers grow loud, and we must silence them,
Else we'll be look'd to, and our trade's at end!

(*They go out on different sides.*)

SCENE II.—CLIFFS—WITH THE SHORE IN THE DISTANCE—A SHIP IN THE OFFING.

Enter EDWARD *and* MARIAN, *hand in hand.*

EDWARD.

Look blythe, my pretty Marian! The true heart
Should ne'er be a misgiving one!—My girl,
My gentle girl, look blythe!—Didst ever see
So fair a day?—There's scarce a cloud in sight!
The breeze is just the one our vessel likes;
Jibb, spanker, all will draw! Tight-water boat,
Staunch crew, bold captain,—Marian, what's to fear?

MARIAN.

Absence, that gives to lovers taste of death!
And long protracted makes them wish for death!

So wearisome to bear! When last you left,
So long you stay'd,—life, from a precious gift
Became a load methought I could lay down,
Nor deem it loss, but gain!—my constant thought,
How time did break his promise, day by day,
To bring thee back to me. O! of the sighs
I have heav'd in an hour I could have found a wind,
Had I the cunning to make store of them,
Would cause thy ship to heel! There have I sat,
From coming in to going out of light,
Perch'd, like a lonely beacon, on the cliff,
Watching for thee;—and if I saw a speck,
I thought thee there—and, when it pass'd away,
I felt the pangs of parting, o'er again!
How long wilt be away?

EDWARD.

A month.

MARIAN.

Say two!
I'll make my mind up to two months—and then,
If thou return'st before the time, thou know'st
It will be usury of happiness!
Thou'lt stay two months!—Two months is a long time!

EDWARD.

I tell thee but a month!

MARIAN.

I'll not believe it;
For, if I should, and thou beyond should'st stay,
Each hour beyond will be another month:

So, for my two months, may I pine two score!
Nay, for two months I will not look for thee!

EDWARD.

And then we marry.

MARIAN.

So my father says.

EDWARD.

O Marian, when thou'rt mine!

MARIAN.

Thou wilt not go
Again to sea.

EDWARD.

No girl!—Another trip
We are rich enough! How love hath made us wise!
When boy and girl, we talk'd as man and wife;
And 'gan to hoard 'gainst days of housekeeping.
Our first small venture—what a heap it brought!
Its value more than ten times doubled! 'Twas
That Heaven did bless it!—Marian, that's the luck!
And since that lucky day, whate'er we've tried
Has thriven with us still.

MARIAN.

Thank Heaven it has.

EDWARD.

Ay!—And the Saint who taught me on her knee,
"No life so happy as an honest one!"—
Thy mother!—Thy dear mother, Marian.—

MARIAN.

She lov'd thee!

EDWARD.

Yes!—What were a wrecker's gains
Compar'd to ours? To think that they're our own!
None to dispute them with us!—No, not e'en
A dead man's bones! I have kept my watch on deck,
In a gale, the billows higher than our cliffs;
That, looking from their tops, you wonder'd how
The vessel could go down, and rise again,
While, as she heel'd until her yard-arms duck'd,
You thought each moment shrowd and brace would crack,
And every mast at once be overboard!
Thus have I kept my watch; and then I have found
The best of treasures was a conscience, whole!
And, with my venture in my chest below,
Would not have chang'd that slanting, creaking deck,
To take the Wrecker's station on the shore,
With wind and wave at work, and breaking up
A fast and rich galleon! Marian,
Why dost thou hang thy head?

MARIAN.

My father is
A wrecker.

EDWARD.

So was mine, my Marian.
What then? We're not the children of their trade!
Pass but another month—Well, I'll say two—
And change of state shall bring us change of scene.
We'll quit these haunts, and ply some inland calling!
Why turn'st thou pale, my girl? What frightens thee?
I only see Black Norris—fear'st thou him?

MARIAN.

Yes!—No!—I fear, yet know not cause to fear—
No just cause!—Yet—Thank Heaven he's gone again!

EDWARD.

He dared offend thee once, but paid the forfeit;
And durst not offer wrong to thee again!
Hast other cause to fear him, Marian?

MARIAN.

When last you were at sea, the weary nights
Thy Mother and thy Marian did beguile,
As ever in thy absence they were wont,
With talk of thee; and, growing sad with that,
Old tales of marvel, from her ample store,
The kindly dame would tell—peace to her spirit!—
I shall not have her now to comfort me!

EDWARD.

Don't speak of that! Go on.

MARIAN.

One dreary night,
A wrecker was the story—banish'd son,
And worse than banish'd father, that did watch
A vessel fast upon the Goodwin Sands.

EDWARD.

I know!—The body of a man was wash'd
Ashore. The wrecker fell to rifling it,
But life was in the body.

MARIAN.

That's the tale.
The wrecker heard him groan—so, conscience-wrung

He did confess—and, to secure his prey,
Destroy'd what Heaven had bade the tempest spare;
Stopp'd with his hands the holy breath of life,
And watching, for assurance that the work
Of foulest sin was done, by the wild glare
Of the lightning, which just then did rend the clouds,
And light the murderous tempest ghastly up,
Beheld the feature of his banish'd boy,
By his own hands compress'd; and stiff in death!

EDWARD.

But what hath this to do with him, the sight
Of whom recall'd the tale?

MARIAN.

His father is
A convict, serving in a distant land.
His term of shame, almost expir'd; for crime
Done on the storm-strewn shore.

EDWARD.

I know he is.

MARIAN.

I mus'd on them, as by thy mother's hearth
I sat; which soon, methought, began to spread
Into our bay—a furious tempest on,—
Men, women, children watching here and there,
On the look out for some unlucky barque,
Its wrath might catch, and strand upon the shore!
There was the lightning, and the thunder, and
The rain and wind, and rattling shingles, as
The billows, mountain high, came tumbling in,
And there stood Norris, on that reef of his.

EDWARD.

Go on, as 'twere a real tale thou told'st,
Thou fixest me, with eagerness to hear.

MARIAN.

Then came a vessel—a huge hulk!—without
A single mast left standing;—such a one
Was wreck'd upon the coast three winters gone,
When thou wast far at sea—I witness'd it.

EDWARD.

That ship did come to mind.

MARIAN.

O how she heav'd
And sank, and reel'd, until at last she struck
Right on the wrecker's reef! when soon she went
To pieces.—Then the body of a man.
Was wash'd on shore, and Norris sprang upon it;
But life, as in the story I had heard,
Was in it still; and Norris took that life!
He stabb'd the shipwreck'd man—and lo! it was
His father!—I did dream the very same
That very night. And often since, in sleep,
Ay, and in waking too, have seen 't again—
Have seen the bay, the tempest, and the ship;
The body floating in, and Norris there,
Rifling it of its life—the body of
His father! Strange things have been thought of him;
And never look I on that scowling man,
But I do think I see a murderer!—
But thou art going and I talk of him!

I know not wherefore, but I never felt
So sad before at parting!

EDWARD.

Fear'st for me?

MARIAN.

No!—Thou art good!—Hast trust in Heaven—implor'st
Its mercy night and morn! 'Twill show it thee!
Thou'lt find it 'mid the tempest—near the shoal
Off the lee-shore!—or, if thy vessel strike,
Or founder, surer than the sea-bird's wing
The sea-bird, it will float thee 'bove the wave,
And bear thee to thy native cliff again!
I have no fears for thee!—I think—I know
Thou wilt come back to me! Thou hast no fears?

EDWARD.

None, Marian!

MARIAN.

But thou hast!—I'm sure thou hast!
I see a trouble in thy face!—I do!
Thou fear'st for something!—What is it?

EDWARD.

I would
Thou hadst not told me of Black Norris.

MARIAN.

Why?
See'st aught in what I told thee?—Dost thou think
My dream bodes ill?—that something's sure to come?
Think'st thou there's aught in dreams? Don't answer me!
I don't believe there is!

EDWARD.

There is not, girl !

MARIAN.

Why wish then what thou didst ?

EDWARD.

He gives thee pain.

MARIAN.

I will not see him again ! I nothing see
When thou'rt away. The sun, the earth, the sea—
All things without are gone—I have no eye,
No ear—except within—within, where only
Then can I see and hear thee !—Where I'm with thee
At sea—on shore—and oft in hardest strait
Of peril—where I'm always nearest to thee
With superhuman power to bear thee through
In spite of sternest danger ! There's the gun !

EDWARD.

Farewell !—

MARIAN.

I'll see thee to the beach !—I will—
Ay to the water's edge ! That I could go
Along with thee !—The waves might rise and roar,
I would not hear or see them !—Come.

EDWARD.

Nay, here
We'll part—my messmates, girl, will laugh at thee.

MARIAN.

Let them ! What ! lose a minute—with an age
To come of absence ! I, that would brave the sea

To go with thee, heed those the sea doth toss!
I'll go with thee e'en to the water's edge!
And then mine eyes shall go along with thee!
And when thou leavest them, and they must stop
My thoughts—my heart—my soul—which water, land,
Air, nothing 'neath the sun can tear thee from! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—THE INSIDE OF ROBERT'S COTTAGE. ROBERT SEATED IN THE CENTRE, OCCUPIED IN SPLICING AN OAR.

Enter STEPHEN—*a lad.*

ROBERT.

Well, Stephen! what of the ship?

STEPHEN.

She's under way
With every yard of canvass spread.

ROBERT.

The wind
Is fair.

STEPHEN.

A point, or more, abaft the beam.
A ten-knot breeze, and steady.

ROBERT.

So it seems.
'Twill change ere night.

STEPHEN.

I see no signs of it.

ROBERT.

You know them not when you do see them, Stephen;
Though a good sailor, you're a young one yet;
But I am old acquaintance of the weather.
"A point," you say, "or more abaft the beam?"
Then is the vane north-west. Ne'er heed the vane,
Look ever to the cloud, the weather-cock
Behoves the shipman heed, which tells what wind
Will come. How steers the cloud?

STEPHEN.

North-west.

ROBERT.

That's right
Against the ship which now sails with the wind!
Now mark my words! Ere night the wind will take
Her merry sails aback, and talk to her!
And bid her clew her gay topgallants up!
There will be call for reefs, and work for sheets
And halyards! "Fore sheet, fore top bowling!"
Throughout the night will keep a busy watch!
But she'll have sea-room, and no gull more light
Doth sit the wave than she. Here! Lend a hand!

(STEPHEN *goes to* ROBERT *and assists him.*)

Where's Marian?

STEPHEN.

I left her on the beach
Following the 'parting ship with all her eyes!

I call'd to her—the sands on which she stood
Had ears as much as she!—She heard me not.
I turn'd to mark if she did follow me—
As well expect the sea.—It mov'd, but she
Stood still—in plight as sad, as barque that's driven
Upon a quick-sand, settling fast, and sure
Never to come away!

ROBERT.

Her mother's vein
Is in the girl!—So fond a wife was she,
That marriage, which with most is end of love,
With me was only the beginning on't!——
She had been early sent to school—remain'd there
'Till she could teach where first she had been taught.
You see the girl she made my Marian!
She made me good, for she was goodness' self,
Reclaim'd me from a wrecker, for a time.
But evil habits, Stephen, like old sores,
Are seldom safe from breaking out again!
One night arose the cry "A ship on shore!"
I had been out carousing at a wedding—
The love of my old trade came strong upon me—
Down to the beach I flew and fell to work.
Unheeding she did follow! Three whole hours
Remained she standing in the pelting storm!
I found her with the blood wash'd out of her
White as our cliff—cold, stiff, and motionless!
My ill got spoil I soon exchang'd for her,
Nor set her down 'till in our bed I laid her—

But heaven did know she was too good for me;
For from that bed she never rose again!

(*turns from* STEPHEN.)

What of the ship?—Go to the door and see!

STEPHEN.

She's hull down.

ROBERT.

Any other sail in sight?

STEPHEN.

Three to the Westward.

ROBERT.

Up or down channel?—which?

STEPHEN.

Up channel do they bear.

ROBERT.

One of the three
May come ashore to night.

STEPHEN.

The ship has chang'd
Her course!

ROBERT.

The wind has chang'd!—'Tis right ahead!
She's on the larboard tack—Is it not so?

STEPHEN.

It is.

ROBERT.

It looks thick weather round the ship,
Does not it?

STEPHEN.

Yes.

ROBERT.

And 'twill grow thicker! Storm
Is in the air, though here 'tis sunshine still.
I feel it! It will blow great guns to-night;
The scud will gallop and the waves will leap!
A cloud has just come o'er the sun! What kind
Of cloud?

STEPHEN.

A streaky one, and black and low,
Stretching from East to West, and in its wake
A fleet of others.

ROBERT.

To be sure! I know it
As well as you that see it.—Get my axe,
Boat-hook, and grapple—Lay them here beside me.

(STEPHEN *goes out and returns with the things.*)

A storm is coming on from the South-East,
Right from the sea—full on the shore! The ship
Is lost that keeps not a good offing, for
The sea, in such a wind as cometh on,
Rolls in like a spring-tide, and surely sweeps
Into our bay the unwary barque, that hugs
This iron-bound inhospitable shore!
What offing keep the ships?

STEPHEN.

Two miles, the first,
And more.

ROBERT.

She's safe. The second ?

STEPHEN.

Scarce a mile.

ROBERT.

She'll have her work to do, to clear the bay !
Behoves her to sail well upon a wind !
Lie high ! Be lively in her stays ! The third ?

STEPHEN.

Not half a mile. The first ship is about !

ROBERT.

The wind has come to her ! That's the new wind
I told you of !—the wind that brings the storm !
Will make the tackle sing ! the bulk-heads creak !
Try braces, shrouds and all ! The very wind
For the wrecker ! I did see it at one o'clock !

STEPHEN.

The second ship is now about.

ROBERT.

She is ?

STEPHEN.

And bearing from the land. The third ship—

ROBERT.

Ay ?
Well, what of her ?—Is she about too ?

STEPHEN.

No,
She misses stays ! They ware her !

ROBERT.

Is she deep ?

STEPHEN.

She is.

ROBERT.

Within the head?

STEPHEN.

Within the head.

ROBERT.

How far?

STEPHEN.

A quarter of a mile.

ROBERT.

A wreck!
Sure as she's now afloat!

STEPHEN.

Here's Marian.

(*Enter* MARIAN, *abstracted.*)

ROBERT.

My Marian! My child! Her thoughts are still
Upon the parting ship. How does my girl?

MARIAN (*coming to herself, and running to* ROBERT.)

Well, father, well! What have you there? Your axe,
Boat-hook, and grapple! Ah!—a storm is coming!
You're for the shore again!—the heartless shore,
That spares nor ship nor shipman!

ROBERT.

Did it lighten?

STEPHEN.

It did.

(ROBERT *rises and takes up his wrecker's implements.*)

MARIAN.

Stay, father, stay! Sit down again
And listen to me.

ROBERT (*resuming his seat*).

Well?

MARIAN.

How canst thou bear
To strip the seaman, whom the winds do strip—
The waves—the rocks—which know not what they do;
But thou dost know, and ought'st to feel! To live
Upon the plunder of the elements!
The havock of whose fury it should be
Thy labour to repair! The drowning man
Forgot, to get possession of the mite
For which he bides the perils of the sea!
And, if he sinks, is not his bubbling breath—
That calls upon the friends he leaves behind—
A testament, more strong than pen can write,
To make assurance unto those he loves
Of aught the billows spare? Thy boat-hook drops—
Give me thy axe.

STEPHEN.

The storm is on! It thunders!

MARIAN.

It is the voice of Heaven in anger!—calls
On men for pity to each other—each
Alike in peril plac'd!—Let go thy axe!
Think of the axe that's lifted now above
And falling fast!—might it not light on thee?

Let go thy axe!—O the poor ship—poor crew!
That hear the thunder which the ship hears not!
O their poor wives! poor children! and poor friends!
That pray this hour some help may be at hand!
Hear me, my father! Have not you a child?
Were you at sea!—were you within that ship!
Give me your axe—and now that coil of rope—
Your grapple—give it me!

STEPHEN.

A gun!

ROBERT.

It is
The signal of distress.

MARIAN.

Thy grapple, father!

ROBERT.

I tell thee, Marian, not a soul can live
In such a sea as boils within our bay.

MARIAN.

And shouldst thou therefore strip the drowned man?
O! at his death-bed, by the side of which
No friend doth stand, there is a solitude
Which makes the grave itself society!—
Helplessness, in comparison with which
An ordinary death is kin to life!—
And silence, which the bosom could fill up
With thoughts more aching, sad, and desolate
Than ever uttered wailing tongues of friends
Collected round the bier of one belov'd!—

To rifle him !—purloin his little stock
Of gold, or jewels, or apparel !—take
And use it as thine own !—thou !—thou ! whom Heaven
Permits to see the sun that's set to him;
And treasures ten times dearer than the sun
Which he shall never see !—O touch it not!
Or if thou touch it—drop it, and fall down
Upon thy knees, at thought of what he was,
And thou, through grace, art still !

ROBERT.

Her mother's voice !
Her mother's words !—Here take the coil !—Put by
My boat-hook and my axe !—My Marian,
I'll not go to the beach !

MARIAN (*having laid the things by*).

Heaven guard his ship !

ROBERT.

Thy lover's ?—Fear not ! She has sea room !—She's
A bird upon the sea !

MARIAN.

I am weary, father !

ROBERT.

Go to thy bed ! Thou art mind and body-worn !

MARIAN.

I will ! You'll mind ?

ROBERT.

I will, my Marian. [*Exit* MARIAN.

STEPHEN.

Another gun !

ROBERT.

And nearer than the first!
She's driving in apace!—Who pass'd the door?

STEPHEN.

Black Norris.

ROBERT.

He will make a mint to-night!

STEPHEN.

She takes the ground!—Her masts are over-board!

ROBERT.

Black Norris will not spare, and why should I?
The waves won't spare, and why should he or I?
Chests, bales will come ashore!—cordage and spars,
Hatchets will go to work!—No one will spare,
And why should I?—Not I!—I'll have my share!

(*Takes up the boat-hook, &c.*)

MARIAN (*rushing in*).

Father!

ROBERT.

My child, go in!

MARIAN.

Thou go'st not forth!

ROBERT.

I must!

MARIAN.

O father! 'tis unhallow'd work!

ROBERT.

Go thou to rest.

MARIAN.

And thou at work like that?
How wouldst thou sleep if I were doing wrong?
I will not let thee forth!

ROBERT.

Come from the door!

MARIAN.

Father!—when Heaven doth bid me shut the door?

ROBERT.

Bid thee who may, I'll open it!—Give way!
(*Forces her from it—she falls.*) [*Exeunt* ROBERT *and* STEPHEN.

MARIAN.

Father!—I'm stunn'd! He's gone!—How could he go!
O vice that's early planted!—Hard to weed it!
Plant virtue early!—Give the flower the chance
You suffer to the weed!—To hope success
Where my poor mother fail'd!—Heaven pity him!
Heaven pity him—and I, his child, on earth
And not attempt to save him!—Father!—Father!—
[*Rushes out.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE VICINITY OF THE SHORE.

Enter WOLF *and* NORRIS, *meeting*.

NORRIS.

WOLF!

WOLF.

Norris!

NORRIS.

For the shore?

WOLF.

Yes.

NORRIS.

Whence I come.
In my o'er haste, what think you I forgot?
My wrecker's gear! I left them all behind!
My hatchet, boat-hook, grapple, e'en my knife! (*going.*)

WOLF (*stopping him*).

Tarry awhile! Take breath! Your knife and axe,
Boat-hook and grapple, are not needed yet.
'Tis but the first of flood. Until the tide
Shall lift her o'er the outer bank, she'll hold
Together. Tarry here and look at her!
I have heard of fine sights; ay, and seen them too!
Now what's the finest sight a man can see?

NORRIS.

The finest sight?—a ship ashore, in a bay
Like ours, ten miles and more from any town;
A black sky, a white water, and a shore
All iron-bound, and boiling round with breakers.
No sight like that for me! What tonnage is she?

WOLF.

Four hundred and above. I know a ship,
And not so large a one, you had rather were
Aground than she.

NORRIS.

I know the ship you mean;
She left the bay at noon. You're right! I hate
That ship! I hate her for the sake of one
She carries. Were my father in that ship
I'd laugh to see her drown!—One whom they call
A good young man—only another name
For a limb of the devil! No young man can be good!
We are young, and know we not what we are?—Good!—
What should make others better?—Better natures?
There's no such thing!—all mankind are the same;
Circumstance makes a difference. Circumstance
Is not the man! Had I that fair-skinn'd girl,
Old Robert's daughter!—her of the dainty limb,
Round swelling form, and dimpled lady cheek—
Had I that girl for messmate, or could have,
You'd see how soon I'd be a good young man,—
Though devil at the bottom still—as he!

WOLF.

You fancy her.—Why not make up to her?

NORRIS.

I told you, now, the sight which most I love.
Wouldst learn the sight which most I hate? Thou shalt.
The show of good, in man or woman,—but,
In woman most.—That's strange!—I hate the sight
Of a modest woman! 'Tis an eye-sore to me!
I never look on one, but straight I fall
To gazing on myself; and then I writhe,
At thought of what I am, and what she seems;
Until I show, unto myself, a beast!—
Yea, a brute beast!—and stand like one before her,
Gazing, and stupid,—dumb!

WOLF.

'Tis strange!

NORRIS.

It is.
I have tried to court her—have accosted her,
But ever, as that lady cheek of hers
She has turned to me, my speech has failed me, and
I have stood stock-still, confounded at myself;
And like a chid cur, slunk at last away!
Strange! that the only show of goodness should
So daunt a bold man, that he dares not do
The thing he dares to wish.

WOLF.

You mean her fair?

NORRIS.

I do; but e'en for fair ends cannot take
Fair means; as smiling, speaking pretty things,
Pretty behaviour, creeping inch by inch!
I'd have her at a bound!—That 's not the way
She would be won. With opportunity
I'd woo her though.

WOLF.

What do you mean?

NORRIS.

No matter.
'Tis said they'll marry when this trip is done.
Now would old Robert take a sail, and leave
The girl alone, I'd promise him that 's gone
A merry wedding when his ship comes back.
How goes it on in the bay? She has moved methinks
Since last we looked.

WOLF.

She will not clear the bank
Before high water, or about it.

NORRIS.

And
The storm you see holds on!—A lovelier,
Did never break a stranded vessel up!
And plenty on't! 'Twill last till midnight.—Black
As it can look, and right in the wind's eye!
Ay, steady that!—How slow the tide comes in,
And yet the wind to help it! O'er the bank
And on the rough ground, she 'll not hold together

The quarter of an hour! I'll be prepared.
Tell them I'm coming! They'll be sure to give
A good berth to the reef!

WOLF.

I will.

NORRIS.

Make haste! (*Exeunt severally.*)

SCENE II.—THE SEA SHORE. THUNDER, LIGHTNING, AND WIND.

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN.

I cannot light on him, and not a soul
I pass'd but I did question!—Where is he?
My brain will burst!—a horrible oppression
Hangs on me; and my senses do discharge
More than their proper parts!—I see—I hear—
Things that I should not—Forms are flitting by me!
Voices are in mine ears, as if of things
That are—and yet I know are not!—Each step
I fear to tumble o'er the body of
Some drowned man!—There's one!—A heap of weeds!
O what wild work do fear and fancy make!
Did some one cry?—Well?—What?—Where are you?—No!
'Tis nobody! What is 't that still keeps up
This moaning in my ears, as if of words

Uttered in agony? 'Tis not the sea!
'Tis not the wind!—I hear them both. 'Tis not
The wreckers on the shore!—they utter nought
But sounds of gladness. 'Tis not the ship!—she's out
Of hearing. Am I growing mad?—What spot
Is this I stand upon?—What brought me here?
'Tis here they say a girl one time went mad,
Seeing a murder done!—she was in quest
Of her brother; and she saw a scuffle, and
Approached the struggling men, just as the one
Did cast the other down. Although 'twas night,
She saw a knife gleam in the lifted hand
Of the uppermost! She tried to call—so she said,
When reason did at last return—but power
Of utterance was gone. Thrice it descended,
With a dull, griding sound;—and then, a voice,
Which stabb'd her heart and brain, exclaimed—"He's dead!"
It was her brother's voice. 'Tis strange that fear
Should be a thing almost as strong as death!
Should shut the lips up—and deprive the limbs
Of motion!—Yet have I a feeling how
The thing may come to pass. The girl alone—
The men upon the ground—one 'bove the other—
The knife in his uplifted hand—it falls!
I feel myself a sense of choking; and
My feet do seem to cleave unto the ground.
My tongue doth stiffen!—Ha!—(*shrieks*)—I have broke the spell!
I'm by myself!—Another minute,—not
The girl more mad than I!—They are gone!—All gone!

The earth, and air, so thick awhile ago,
With things that neither earth, nor air do own,
Are empty now! Mine ears, and eyes, take note
Of nothing but what is—the booming sea—
The yelling wind—the rattling shingles, as
The waves do roll them up and down again;
And back my wand'ring thoughts return, to that
Which brought me 'midst their uproar—to persuade
My poor, misguided father to return
And from his lawless work restrain his hands.
I have travers'd all the Westward shore in vain,
I'll search the Eastward now.

(*Starts again at the same heap of weeds.*)

Not yet myself!—
'Tis the same heap of weeds I saw before! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—ANOTHER PART OF THE SHORE.

Enter ROBERT, *followed by* NORRIS.

NORRIS.

Old Robert!—Hoa!—Stop!—Art afraid of me?

ROBERT.

I never fear'd a man.

NORRIS.

Why shun me then?

ROBERT.

I like thee not.

NORRIS.

"Two of a trade!" Is't so?
Well! I'm the luckiest wrecker of you all.
I cannot help it! Fortune bear the blame!
That has her favourites, as all men know.
She has long made one of me! Is it right to hate
A man for his good luck?

ROBERT.

It is n't that.

NORRIS.

It is n't that!—What else?—What can you say
Against me else? A splinter'd spar the waves
Do throw to you— a lock-fast chest to me!
To me the breakers slue the captain in;
Mate—passenger from the Indies, West or East.
A foremast man to you—you know 'tis so,
And like the rest do bear me envy; most
Unlike a man! But fortune ever turns
The evil you do wish me, into good.
I have no partner in my gains—what comes
To hand is all my own! "Afraid of me!"
I said it but in sport. I know you're not
Afraid of me, or any other man,
Or any thing!—Have I not seen you leap
Into a boiling sea, to save a wretch
When his boat founder'd! 'Twas a feat I doubt
If any other of the craft would do!
Wilt go, or tarry? Nay, there's time enough;
She holds together yet. There's lots of time.
What speed didst come when drove the last on shore?

ROBERT.

Some coils of cordage; and a spar or two.

NORRIS.

What then did fortune, think you, throw to me?

ROBERT.

I cannot tell.

NORRIS.

One hundred guineas, all
But one, lapp'd here and there, in various coin,
In the heavy vest and trowsers of a man—
I mean, a body—that was wash'd ashore.
Here's one of them.

ROBERT.

A broad Doubloon.

NORRIS.

How much
Brought you your spars and cordage? How I laughed
To see you, heavy laden, toiling home
With a few crowns' worth, and I going light
With a good hundred guineas, all but one!
And you don't like me!—Why?—I'm a rough man;
And low'ring as they say!—but has all fruit
A fair outside? How ill-favoured a one
A walnut has—a chestnut—cocoa-nut!
And yet how sweet within!—Yea there ismilk
Within the cocoa-nut!—You never know
Some men by their outsides!—Prove them, and then
You'll know them. Here's another piece more broad,
And heavy than the first. Know you the coin?

ROBERT.

No!—it is strange to me.

NORRIS.

Examine it.
There's something now that I would be about;
Yet know not what it is!—Ne'er heed! The Devil
Will prompt me when 'tis time! (*aside.*)

ROBERT.

I cannot tell
The coin.

NORRIS.

Here; take a look at this.

ROBERT.

Another!

NORRIS.

Ay!—Will you believe me now?

ROBERT.

Black Norris, you're
A lucky man!

NORRIS.

"Black Norris!" Well!—it is
My nick-name. You may give it me—more black
May go by fairer name!

ROBERT.

I meant no harm.

NORRIS.

I know you didn't!—There's none! I tell you what—
There's not a man of all the crew, but one,
I do not hate. The best were first to 'peach,

When my old father, seven long years ago,
Did something which he could not do by law;
And was transported, for the lack of learning.
He didn't know 'twas wrong!—Well, as I said,
I hate them all, but one; and which is he?—
Yourself—I say no more!—Believe it, or
Believe it not!

ROBERT.

Nay, rather I'd believe it.
I never thought before, you were so frank.

NORRIS.

How could you think?—Grew samphire on yon cliff,
Who'd know't, if no one went to seek it there?
You keep aloof, and—strange!—you know me not!
You, none of you, consort with me, except
Young Wolf, another hang-dog, as they say
He's a wrong'd man, and so am I—we are friends;
For common wrongs make friends of those that share them.

ROBERT.

'Tis natural.

NORRIS.

'Tis right!—as common fortunes,
So likewise doth a common vein, make friends.
My greatest enemy allows me brave!
I car'd for thee no more than I did care
For any other of the churlish set;
But, when I saw thee venture thy own life,
With ten to one against thee, for that man,

I took a liking to thee!—That, you may
Believe, or not, as well as the other.

ROBERT.

Nay,
But I believe it.

NORRIS.

You can do no good
To me!—I have nothing to get by you!

ROBERT.

Nothing!

NORRIS.

Have I not?—What a silly adage that
About old birds and chaff! (*Aside.*)

ROBERT.

Here—here's thy gold.

NORRIS.

Nay, keep it, an thou wilt.

ROBERT.

Not so, good Norris.

NORRIS.

A rare bird I, to turn from black to white!— (*Aside.*)
Why, I believe you're right! 'Tis doubtful gain,
To keep a thing that's not one's own! The ship
Is now on the rough ground!—How fair she lies!—
Her broadside to the sea, that not a wave
But tells upon her!—What a cloud of surf
Keeps flying over her!—Look!—There's a sea!
'Twill take her right a midships—Hurra!—Hurra!—

She has parted in the waist!—Old Robert, where
The use of words, when men can talk by deeds!
Yon reef you know is mine—they call it mine,
Because I make it mine—So far it runs
Into the bay, it makes a kind of eddy,
Whose swirl doth sweep all kinds of lumber in
That come within its reach—as prove my gains;
'Tis thine to day! Go try thy luck upon it.
I'll help thee, if thou need'st—but not to touch
A stiver, though ten bodies should float in,
With pockets cramm'd with gold. There's something! haste!
The waves do snatch as readily as give.
The tide is on the turn—the shore doth shelve
A foot in every nine!

ROBERT.

I thank thee, Norris.

NORRIS.

Off to the reef—Have cause, and thank me then!

[*Exit* ROBERT, *hastily.*

It is a body that is wash'd ashore!
I'd know it at twice the distance. A fine torch
The lightning! Rain will never put it out!
A body!—I begin to see it now.
Yes, it is done!

WOLF (*entering*).

Well, Norris!

NORRIS.

All is well.
Run to the nearest group of wreckers;—say
You saw old Robert stooping o'er a body—

That you suspect foul play—and bring them to
The reef. He's there—but hold—not quite so fast;
Let me have time to join him.—Go!—don't say
That I am there. Now, pretty Marian, [*Exit* WOLF.
Sure as thy lover is this hour at sea,
Thy father takes a trip, and follows him.
Bide there my tackle!—I had best go bare!
[*Puts his Boat-hook, &c., behind a rock, and Exit.*

SCENE IV.—THE SHORE CLOSE TO THE SEA.

Enter ROBERT, *dragging in a body.*—MARIAN *in the distance, slowly coming down a path cut out of the cliff.*

ROBERT.

The surge won't reach thee there!—I warrant me
No fear thou'lt go to it. Thy last—last draught,
In this world, hath it given thee—a cold,
Unwelcome one! Safe bide thou there! The waves
Are in a giving mood! I'd be at hand
To profit by their bounty. I did think
Some one was near me! Fancy!—How it lightens! [*Exit.*

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN.

The storm distracts me with its din! This roar,
This never ending roar, which, round and round,
The Heavens keep up!—in which the sea doth join,
As though the thunder were not noise enough,
With cries of men and women! I am blind
With the lightning! flash and flash and flash, as quick

As they can follow—mingling light and darkness so,
That scarce you know one moment, which is which!
I'm quite bewilder'd!—I will look above,
Beyond the clouds—beyond the stars! No storm
Is there! no wreck!—no raging sea!—no thunder!
But calm, and warmth, and brightness, as befits
The dwellings of the blest!—My mother's there!
O, my poor father! Here's the storm again!
Sea, thunder, lightning—all come back again!

Re-enter ROBERT—*starts at seeing* MARIAN.

ROBERT.

I have dropp'd my knife, methinks it's somewhere here!
What's that?—Is it a mortal thing? It makes
My spirit faint within me!—'Tis the form
Of my lost Marian!—Even so she stood
In the storm wherein her life was cast away!
Can she not lie in her grave for me?—Do my sins
Break on her last rest there, and call her thence?
I sent her thither—on such nights as this
I have often look'd about me with the thought
That she was near me. There at last she is!
It is my Marian risen from her grave!
She comes to me!—O powers of grace, preserve me! (*Kneels.*)

MARIAN.

The strength of Heaven!—To see it, yet not feel it!
Before its face to do what it forbids!
And it in anger!—see the weapons of
Its wrath in motion—feel the huge earth shake at them!
And never pay it awe!—stand up to it!

Defy it !—'stead of falling on thy knees,
And asking it for mercy.

ROBERT.

Mercy !

MARIAN.

Ha !
My father !

ROBERT.

Marian !

MARIAN.

On thy knees !—That's right—
Fear not ! Thou dost Heaven's bidding !—Do not rise
Until thou risest with its blessing on thee !

ROBERT (*rising*).

What brought thee here, my child ?—Thou ne'er before
Didst follow me.

MARIAN.

I came to look for thee ;
And to persuade thee to come home with me.
Thou tremblest—Thou art pale—as livid as
The lightning ! Dost thou hear ? 'Tis every where !
Not the clouds only, but the very air—
The very sea—the very earth—do thunder !
All—all is din and fire ! It is right
For man to tremble !

ROBERT.

'Tis not that !

MARIAN.

What then ?

ROBERT.

I took thee for thy mother, Marian!

MARIAN.

Think me her still, and what she'd have thee do,
Do, by the love thou still dost bear to her!
Forswear this lawless life!—Thou wouldst not rob
A living man!—'Tis manlier to strip
The living, than the dead!

ROBERT.

This night's the last!

MARIAN.

This night!—O, no!—The last night be the last!
Who makes his mind up that a thing is wrong,
Yet says he'll do that thing for the last time,
Doth but commence anew a course of sin,
Of which that last sin is the leading one,
Which many another, and a worse, will follow!
At once begin! How many, at this hour,
Alive as thou art, will not live to see
To-morrow's light!—If thou shouldst be cut off!
Should thy last sin be done, on thy last night!
Should Heaven avenge itself on that last sin
Thou dost repentingly!—My father, come!—
O! a bad conscience, and a sudden death!
Come home!—Come home!—Come home!

ROBERT.

I'll follow thee.
I'll fetch my boat-hook, and my other gear,
And follow thee. [*Exit.*

MARIAN.

I'll loiter till you come. (*Goes slowly out.*)

Enter NORRIS (*cautiously*).

NORRIS.

Now is the time!—Now! while her back's to me.
Is he dead? There's warmth methinks about the heart,
More than there should be! 'Tis no matter!—Cowards
May stick at trifles!—Can I find a stone,
To knock him on the head?—What's this?—a knife!
'Tis Robert's!

MARIAN (*re-appearing and ascending the cliff*).

What's that you are doing, father?

NORRIS.

She takes me for her father!—Good! She'll see
What I'll do, and think it is her father does it.
And when 'tis done, so will I slink away,
She can't discover her mistake!—Now for it!

(*He plunges the knife into the body*—MARIAN *utters a faint shriek, and falls senseless.*)

She saw it! She is in my power! She's mine!
I'll hence and watch my time. [*Exit.*

ROBERT (*re-entering*).

To leave it there!
And the last time! There's treasure—I did feel it
Hard, hard and bulky! Marian is away!

(*Goes to the body, and empties one pocket.*)

What have we here? Some of the bright broad pieces
Black Norris show'd me! What a folly 'twere

To leave them in the pockets of the dead,
And let the living go with empty ones!
I'll count them by and by!—and this is full!

(*Empties the other pocket.*)

I'll ease it of its burthen!—Gold! All Gold!
Whence comes that glare? Ha!—'Tis the beacon struck
By the lightning, and on fire!

Enter suddenly, AMBROSE, PHILIP, *and others.*

AMBROSE.

What do you there,
Old Robert?

ROBERT.

Nothing that I fear to do.

AMBROSE.

What hold you in your hand?

ROBERT.

Gold!

AMBROSE.

Gold?

ROBERT.

Ay, gold!

PHILIP.

Let's look at the body!—What is here—a knife?

AMBROSE.

A knife!

PHILIP.

A knife!—fast in the dead man's breast!

AMBROSE.

Pull it out!

PHILIP.

'Tis Robert's knife!—How came this, Robert?
He is confounded!—See!—he cannot speak.

AMBROSE.

Look! What white thing is that, that's lying yonder?

PHILIP.

It is his daughter,—she has slipp'd her foot
And fallen—or swoons with horror of the deed
Perhaps she saw him do. E'er since the storm
Came on, has she been ranging up and down
In search of him.

AMBROSE.

Look to her! Take her home!
For him, we must bestow him somewhere till
To-morrow; and, by turns, keep watch upon him.
How like a guilty man he looks! Come on!
Who ever thought to bring it to his door! [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE INSIDE OF A HUT.

ROBERT *discovered pacing to and fro.*

ROBERT.

A MURDERER!—I, that do sicken at
The sight of blood, to do the deed of blood!
A murderer! and with a hand as free
From blood as an infant's!—To be tried for it!
Condemned, perhaps, and executed!—I!—
That never did it!—Then my branded name,
That don't deserve the brand—and, worse than all,
To leave it to my child—my Marian!
My fair young girl!—Good!—Good!—whom Heaven did send
To save her father, but he would not heed her—
Turned a deaf ear unto an angel's lips,
To listen to that devil, the greed of pelf!
That was my crime indeed—but only that;
Some one has circumvented me, but who?
Black Norris? Him or Wolf do I suspect—
But what's suspicion only?—Not a thread
To bind a man with.

Enter NORRIS.

NORRIS.

Robert!

ROBERT.

Is it you,
Black Norris?

NORRIS.

Yes, 'tis I—Black Norris, as
You call me—come to cheer you.

ROBERT.

Well, Black Norris?

NORRIS.

I don't believe you did that murder.

ROBERT.

No?

NORRIS.

Some one has got the better of you—laid
A trap for you, and caught you—who—Heaven knows!
I say, I don't believe you guilty, but
Appearances are all against you—caught
Stripping the body, with the gold in your hand,
And your knife sticking in the dead man's breast!—

ROBERT.

Who stuck it there?

NORRIS.

Why, how should I tell?

ROBERT (*catching hold of* NORRIS).

Nay,
Who stuck it there?

NORRIS.

Not I,
Nor any one I know!—Take off thy hands,

Old man !—I did not come to wrestle with thee;
Wish'd I to play a game, I'd tackle to
With tougher sinews !—For another end
I came—to tell thee 'tis my turn to watch,
And, hast thou goods to run, the coast is clear—
Now, grip me by the throat.

ROBERT.

Forgive me, Norris.

NORRIS.

Forgive thee !—Fiddlestick !—Offend me first,
Then ask me to forgive thee. Here is gold
For that they took away from thee.—Away !
Make straight for the East coast !—Take shipping there,
And where thou settlest, advertise me !—Go !—

ROBERT (*going, stops short*).

My child ! I had forgot her—seek her, seek
And bring her to me ! I can't fly from death
Without my child !—I can't forsake my child !

NORRIS.

Forsake thy child !—a stranger now to her
Availeth more than thou. What are the dead
Unto the living ?—Nothing !—Not the worth
Of a wheaten straw—That helps to make a light !
You can make nothing of the dead.—If you thirst—
Hunger—go naked—suffer any thing,
You may for them ! There's help in a live mouse
More than a dead man ! And what else art thou ?
Accus'd of that, the man that doeth which

The law condemns to die.—Escape the law—
And then talk of thy Marian.

ROBERT.

No more;
Thou madden'st me!

NORRIS.

I tell thee what thou know'st
Must be! and, sooth to say, though a rough man,
I have no desire to see thee die the death!
Who meets it bravest, but puts on a mask
Which only proves the agony 'twould hide,
When at the hangman's touch, the sweat-drop starts
On the bold brow, so seeming calm; and the blood
Flies to the heart, and leaves the valiant cheek,
That would be thought to smile, without a drop
To vouch for it!

ROBERT.

Thou harrow'st me, good Norris.

NORRIS.

Yet what I tell, thou know'st! What must it be
When a reprieve at the last point has kill'd.
I knew a man who narrowly escap'd.
To think of what he told me, even now
Makes me breathe thick, and from my crown to my sole
Sets my flesh tingling; and all o'er my skin
Spreads the chill, clammy, heavy dew of death!—
What at the sight of the huge, living mass
Of human faces all upturn'd, he felt
As doth a living man, suppose he lay

Beside a corpse ; for such, he said, he seem'd
To be unto himself. How he did freeze,
At the heat of the sun, with the thought of the grave ! How life
Did stare on him from every thing around him!
Fields, houses, walls, stones—yea, the grisly frame
He stood on, his last footing-place in the world !
And he alone a spectacle of death !
The process then——

ROBERT.

Leave off !—I choke !—I fly !—
The door is fast !

NORRIS.

Thy fear hath shot the bolt !—
You see 'tis open !

ROBERT (*taking his handkerchief from his neck*).

Give my Marian this,
And be a friend to her.

NORRIS.

I will.

ROBERT.

My child !

NORRIS.

Soon as the seas are cross'd, what hinders her
Take ship, and follow thee ?

ROBERT.

Thou'lt see to that ?

NORRIS.

I will.

ROBERT.

My blessing on thee, Norris!

NORRIS.

Nay!——

ROBERT.

Thou'rt the preserver of my life—and all
That makes it life to me! As thou to me
Art good, may heaven prove good to thee! Thy face
Why dost thou turn away?

NORRIS.

I do not like
That any see me weep.—I had as lief
Be hang'd as thank'd. My watch is nearly spent,
The quarter of an hour, and 'tis the span
In which thy coil of life doth lie.—Make haste!
Why dost thou stand bewilder'd thus? Look, Robert!
There is the door!—A minute more 'tis lock'd!
Choose on which side on't thou wilt then be found.

ROBERT.

I take thy proffer—Norris!

NORRIS.

If thou breath'st
Another word of thanks!——

ROBERT.

I won't!—You'll not
Forget my child?—You'll be a father to her?
Swear thou wilt be a father to my child!

NORRIS.

You note my hand is on the key.

ROBERT.

Don't turn it !
I am gone !—I fly !—My Marian !—My Marian !

(*Rushes out.*)

NORRIS.

My Marian !—An open window. Ay !
Now a fast door. Who's there ?

WOLF (*outside*).

'Tis I.

NORRIS.

What, Wolf ? (*Enter* WOLF.)
Come in ! He's off !—he's fled !—Art sorry, man ?
I'm not much prone to pity ; yet had as lief
A man that's innocent should escape as die.

WOLF.

That's innocent !

NORRIS.

Thou fool ! Hast known me still
Thy master in all kinds of craftiness,
Could buy and sell thee, and believ'st thou yet
He murder'd him ?

WOLF.

Who did it then ?

NORRIS.

By my troth
Thou hast no stomach for a deed of blood !
Thy own seems spill'd at only thought of one !
'Sdeath ! Is't a frost, man, that thy cheek 's so white,

And thou dost shiver so? "Who did it then?"
No one! There's fire to warm thee! Be thyself!

WOLF.

The knife was taken from his breast.

NORRIS.

It was!—
What ails thy teeth to make them chatter so?
Want'st meat, or drink, or sleep, or what? "The knife
Was taken from his breast!" What then? The knife
Found nothing there it could not find within
A six weeks' buried corpse! Furies and death!
Believ'st me not—or tak'st me for a ghost,
That thou dost gaze me thus with mouth agape?
Listen! Whilst he was gone to fetch his gear,
Lay further down the beach, did I come up,
Find the wreck'd seaman, dead—I tell thee dead!
'Sdeath! won't believe me still?—Searching for something
Would leave a mark might serve as evidence
That violence had been done—my hand by chance
Lit on his knife, he had dropp'd—on Robert's knife!—
When didst thou get the ague? What a fit!—
I say by chance I lit on Robert's knife,
For which this hand of mine—not Robert's, as
Thou thought'st—Thou dog-fish! How I laugh at thee!—
Did find the sheath wherein thou saw'st it sticking.
Why thou wilt shake thee out of joint; what heeds
A dead man's breast a knife, more than a pincushion
A pin!

WOLF (*stammering*).

The body!

NORRIS.

What of it?
Is it tied to thee? Art in the death grip of
The drowned man? I would not think thee, Wolf,
A chicken heart, yet never saw I man
That look'd more like a coward! Couldst thou see
Thyself and look at me!—What of the body?
Did it rise up, and walk, or run, or caper,
Or offer thee a hand to shake, or talk,
Or troll a song to thee? What did the body
To make thee marvel like a man demented?
Tell me that I may play the madman too!

WOLF.

Pray Heaven thou go'st not mad in earnest!

NORRIS.

Man!
Wolf!—Have a care—don't take me for a child
Because thyself art one! Thou wouldst not say
That life was in the body? It was warm
About the heart!—(*aside.*)—Sit down, good Wolf, sit down,
Recover thee a little. Tell thy tale
Thy own way. For I see there's something—come—
Go on—the body?

WOLF.

I return'd to it
When thou and all the rest were gone, to search
If treasure were about it. It was bleeding!

I thought it strange, for not a drop did follow
When first they drew the knife out; and I fancied
Life must be in it still—and so it was!
I felt the heart beat slow and dull—mine own
Methought would stop!

NORRIS.

Kept the blood flowing still?

WOLF.

It did—more free; and as it flow'd the heart
More full and quick did beat.

NORRIS.

It had been wrong
To stop the blood.

WOLF.

I didn't!—I did mind
Nothing but the heart, which now beat stronger still,
Until methought the chest began to heave,
And so it did! And presently I heard
A gurgling in the throat of the shipwreck'd man,
And I began to freeze, expecting now
To hear the body speak.

NORRIS.

Did it?

WOLF.

Almost!
A sound between a murmur and a moan.

NORRIS.

Was it repeated?

WOLF.

Yes; but very faint.

NORRIS.

Any more?

WOLF.

Yes; fainter though at every time;
And now the heart beat faint, and presently
Came a slight shivering o'er the body—then
A sigh—and nothing more—the soul had fled!

NORRIS.

I thought 'twas over warm about the heart!

WOLF.

O Norris, say it not!

NORRIS.

What did I say?

WOLF.

You thought 'twas over warm about the heart.

NORRIS.

Well!—Of what value is a spark of life,
More than a spark of any other thing?

WOLF.

The body was thy father's!

NORRIS.

Devil!—Imp
Of Hell! Unsay it, or thou diest, with
A lie in thy throat!

WOLF.

Were it my last breath, Norris,
I speak the truth!

NORRIS.

Who else has heard it from thee?

WOLF.

No one!

NORRIS.

I am mad!—No wonder if I am!
Wretch, hadst thou stopped the old man's blood—

WOLF.

He had liv'd!
I thought thy interest 'twas, that he should die.
I knew not then it was thy father.

NORRIS.

Devil!
Why had I anything to say to thee!
And where's the body now?

WOLF.

I left it where
I found it.

NORRIS.

Fool!—Thou shouldst have carried it
To the cliff, and cast it straight into the sea
Where ne'er the sand is dry.

WOLF.

Would not the sea
Have thrown it up again?

NORRIS.

The sea?—The earth,
Though it were buried in't ten fathom deep,
Would throw it up again!—Nothing can make
A grave that's deep enough to keep it!—Cast
A mountain on 't 'twould heave it off!—They'll know it
When it is brought before the coroner!

WOLF.

I have taken care of that.

NORRIS.

Mangled the features?

WOLF.

Yes!

NORRIS.

Savage!—

WOLF.

For thy sake I did it!

NORRIS.

True!
Right!—You did very right—and after all
What was it but a piece of clay?—Now, Wolf,
Where wouldst thou be?

WOLF.

Why, any where but here!—

NORRIS.

Wilt cross the sea?—Thou hadst a hand, thou knowest,
In the murder—Thou didst finish it—Thou let'st
The old man die—He were not murder'd else—
Wilt cross the sea?—I'll give thee gold enough
To pay thy passage wheresoe'er thou'lt go,
And set thee down there as a man,—and more,
If more thou want'st—Wilt cross the sea?

WOLF.

I will.

NORRIS.

When wilt thou start?—To-morrow?

WOLF.

Yes.

NORRIS.

At dawn?

WOLF.

At dawn!—

NORRIS.

That's good!—That's excellent!—I 'm much
Beholden to thee, Wolf—Thou 'rt a true friend—
Go far—Go very far!—The more apart
The better! Stop not at a thousand miles—
Or two—or three!—Look, Wolf! I have a jar
Buried in the garden, full of treasure—Take it
And luck go with you!—You will start to-morrow?
At dawn?—Take passage to a distant land,
Will you not?—Thank you! Thank you, Wolf! I'll ne'er
Forget you!—never cease to be your friend! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—THE INSIDE OF ROBERT'S COTTAGE.

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN.

My father's house! O would it were indeed
My father's house, as I did know it once.
I were content to be a wrecker's child!
But now I have a feeling as all things
Did loathe me!—E'en the threshold which from childhood

I have been used to pass!—I entered it
With doubt, as though I cross'd it 'gainst its will;
The very bed I have slept in every night
For eighteen years, did seem to say to me,
"Lie on the floor!"—And when in agony
I threw myself upon the floor, I shrank,
As that did spurn me too, and cry to me,
"Thou art the daughter of a murderer!"—
Me, that when household use required the life
Of a poor brainless bird, would run a mile
To get some other hand to take it, nor
Could even then look on! But where is nature?
She has been scared away, but now returns.
Oh my poor father!—Oh my luckless father!
My hapless, guilty father!—Will the day
Never more break—I only wait for it
To seek for him, and comfort him, and tell him
That I am still his child—his Marian!

ROBERT (*rushing in*).

My Marian!—What! Hold'st thou back from me?

MARIAN.

No!

ROBERT.

But thou dost!

MARIAN.

No!—No!—See there—I have thrown
My arms around thy neck!

ROBERT.

Yes!—but you turn
Your head away!

MARIAN.

Is't turn'd away now?

ROBERT.

No!
But where's the kiss you never met me but
You printed on my cheek?—

MARIAN.

There!

ROBERT.

Humph!—I fear
I have thrown away both time and risk—I came
To seek my daughter—but she is not here—
She has gone from me!—deserted me!—I have lost her!

MARIAN.

No!—No!

ROBERT.

You know her?—fetch me her!—make haste!

MARIAN.

She's here!

ROBERT.

She's not!—she's any where but here!
And I am here at peril of my life
To see her for a minute e'er I go
Perhaps for ever from her.

MARIAN.

Oh, my father!
I am indeed thy child!—Thy Marian!

ROBERT.

These tears are something like her—I begin
To think that thou'rt my child—Thou art my child!
Thou hast heard it?

MARIAN.

Yes!

ROBERT.

What ponderous thing is "Yes,"
To take a sigh like that to heave it off?

MARIAN.

Thou art in danger.

ROBERT.

Great!—To-morrow, may be,
A dungeon! there, most certainly the dock!—
There, in all likelihood the gibbet! but
I have a chance—that chance is now!—'Tis little!
And, every moment that I lose, grows less!
But I'm content it should go all!—ay all!
If I have lost one fraction of my child
That's due to me—go all—and let it go!

MARIAN.

I am all thy own—Thy own hand not thy own
More than thy Marian!—Thou'rt in flight!—We'll fly
Together!

ROBERT (*re-assured*).

No, but thou shalt follow me,
And speedily!—Think kindly of Black Norris!—
He set me free—He'll be a friend to thee—
He furnish'd me with means of flight.

MARIAN.

With means?

MARIAN (*goes out, and returns with a little purse*).

Here, father, here; 'tis little; but a mite
Is a mountain if 'tis wanting when 'tis needed!

ROBERT.

Part of thy little store?

MARIAN.

The rest's at sea,
Would it were here!—Its absences now is loss
Which, though it come a score times doubled back,
It never can repair!

ROBERT.

And thou, my child?—

MARIAN.

I have hands!—There's Heaven!—Oh father!

ROBERT.

Dost thou think
Thy father guilty?

MARIAN.

I think nothing now
Except that thou'rt in danger.

ROBERT.

Marian,
I no more did the deed——

MARIAN.

They will be here
And then thou art lost!

ROBERT.

Thou dost not think me guilty?

MARIAN.

What matter what thy Marian thinks, when death
Pursues thee and thou lingerest here, and not
One moment am I certain but the next
It may o'ertake thee—here!—in thy own house!

That 's now no shelter for thee—here !—before
Thy Marian's eyes that cannot help thee ! —Fly !
Thy life perhaps may pay for the next breath
Thou drawest here !—The thought distracts me !—Fly !

ROBERT.

It cannot be thou think'st me guilty ?

MARIAN.

Fly !
Terror doth take away my senses—Fly !

ROBERT.

I do begin to doubt thou think'st me guilty ?

MARIAN.

Oh father, fly !

ROBERT.

I am innocent !

MARIAN.

'Tis well !

ROBERT.

It is not well—I am innocent ! I'll swear it !

MARIAN.

Thou need'st not father—Don't !—Fly !—Fly !—

ROBERT.

By—

MARIAN.

Stop !—

ROBERT.

Thou think'st me guilty !—Spare thy kindness—There !
Perish thy coin ! I will not use it !—Fly !—
Do any thing to save my life !—If it goes
It may go !—Here I'll sit !—E'en here ! Ay here !—

Here in the cottage thou wast born in, nurs'd,
Brought up in—'till now thou'rt eighteen years, and now
Dost tell thy father he's a murderer!
Here I'll wait for them—Let them come and take me!
Take me before thine eyes!—Imprison me!
Try me, and hang me! I'll not turn my hand
To save my life! since my own child that knows me
Believes me guilty. I am guilty!—Yes!
Let all the world beside believe me so.

AMBROSE (*without*).

What hoa!

ROBERT.

They come!

MARIAN.

Fly by the other door!

ROBERT.

You hear! It is beset.

MARIAN.

Hide some where!

ROBERT.

Where?
They'll search the house!—Were there a hundred doors
And all were free—were there a cavern, where
No foot could follow me—I would sit here
And let them take me!

AMBROSE.

Robert!

ROBERT (*opens the door*).

Here!—Come in!

MARIAN.

For mercy's sake!—

ROBERT.

For no sake !—Here I am,
Take me !

MARIAN.

My father !

ROBERT.

I am guilty !

MARIAN.

Nay !—

ROBERT.

She says I am—take me away !

MARIAN.

Oh ! stay !
Don't take him yet !—Good friends !—you are neighbours !—
don't !
Don't take away my father !—leave him with me !—
Pray—pray don't take him !

ROBERT.

I am guilty—take me !
I am guilty !—Ask my child—my Marian !

MARIAN.

Don't !—Don't !—Stay ! Mercy ! Mercy !—O my father !

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A WAITING ROOM.

Enter AMBROSE *and* PHILIP.

AMBROSE.

He is committed, and I pity him!
To be condemned upon the evidence
Of his own daughter! 'Tis unnatural
To take away the life that gave us life!
This comes of learning!—Had it been a child
Of yours, or mine, what heed would she have taken
Of a false oath, to save a father's life?
Her mother was a sort of lady—ay,
The daughter of a broken gentleman,
Took up his quarters in the cottage, while
Old Robert's father liv'd. They fell in love,
And at the father's death, they married.

PHILIP.

So
Did come her lady breeding.

AMBROSE.

Even so.
She, as her mother did before, it seems
Doth quarrel with the freedom that we take
With dead men's gear; and to the beach must needs

Follow her father—She had better far
Have sought her death, for what a curse must now
Her life be to her! Was't not strange she fainted
Soon as her evidence was done, and yet
Could give that evidence!

PHILIP.

Here comes old Robert.

Enter ROBERT *between two constables, followed by men and women.*—NORRIS *in the back ground.*

ROBERT.

I am innocent! I am murder'd! My own child
Has sworn my life away! My Marian!
Falsely—most falsely!—When they try me, 'tis
By her I die; not by the judge—the jury,
Or any one but her! She gives the verdict!—
Passes the sentence!—puts my limbs in irons!—
Casts me into my dungeon!—drags me thence
To the scaffold!—is my executioner!—
Does all that puts her father in his grave
Before his time!—Her father, good to her
Whate'er he was to others—Oh! to have died
By any evidence but mine own child's!
Take me to prison.

FIRST CONSTABLE.

No, we are waiting for
The order of committal.

MARIAN (*rushing in*).

O, my father!

ROBERT.

Thy father?—Am I so?—I prithee, girl,
Call me that name again! It is a thing
Too good to be believed!

MARIAN.

What, father?

ROBERT.

What?
Why, to be father to so good a child!

MARIAN.

So good a child?

ROBERT.

So good a child! I say it
Again!—So good a child!—Come, look at me!
Give me thy hand!—the other one, and look
Full in my face!—And fix thine eyes on mine!—
As I do live, thou canst!—And yet canst lie
To call me father!—Thou'rt no child of mine!

(*Casts her from him, she falls on her knees*).

MARIAN.

My father!

ROBERT.

Up! or I will trample on thee!
Fasten my hands in thy dark silken hair,
And lift thee up by it, and fling thee from me!
Who gave thee those fine locks?

MARIAN.

Thou! Thou!

ROBERT.

Who gave thee
Those hands thou clasp'st to me?

MARIAN.

Thou!

ROBERT.

I!—Indeed!
And the rest of thy limbs?—Thy body? and the tongue
Thou speak'st with—Owest thou everything to me?

MARIAN.

I do!—indeed I do!

ROBERT.

Indeed! Indeed!
Thou liest! Thou wert never child of mine!
No!—No!—I never carried thee up and down
The beach in my arms, many and many a day,
To strengthen thee, when thou wast sickly!—No!
I never brought thee from the market town,
Whene'er I went to it, a pocket load
Of children's gear!—No!—No, I never was
Your play-fellow that ne'er fell out with you
Whate'er you did to him!—No!—Never! Nor
When fever came into the village, and
Fix'd its fell gripe on you, I never watch'd
Ten days and nights running, beside your bed,
Living I know not how, for sleep I took not,
And hardly food! And since your mother died——

MARIAN.

Thou'lt kill me, father!

ROBERT.

Since your mother died
I have not been a mother and a father
Both—both to thee!

MARIAN.

Oh! spare me!

ROBERT.

I was never
Anything to thee!—Call me father!—why
A father's life is wrapp'd up in his child!
Was mine wrapp'd up in thee?—Thou know'st 'twas not!—
How durst thou call me father?—fasten upon me!—
That never gave thee proof, sign, anything
Of recognition that thou wast my child!
Strain'd thee to my heart by the hour!—parting thy hair
And smoothing it, and calling thee all things
That fondness idolizing thinks upon
To speak its yearning love!—core of my heart!
Drop of my heart's blood, was worth all the rest!
Apple of mine eye, for which I'd give mine eyes,
Orbs, sockets, lids and all!—'till words grew sobs,
And love, o'er fraught, put what it lov'd away
To get relief from tears!—Never did I
Do this to thee!—why call me father, then,
That art no child of mine?

MARIAN.

I am thy child?
The child to whom thou didst all this and more.

ROBERT.

Thou stood'st not then, just now, in the witness box,
Before the justice in that justice room,
And swor'st my life away.

MARIAN.

Where thou dost say,
I stood!—What thou dost say, I did!—and yet,
Not in those hours thou nam'st of fond endearment,
Felt, as I felt it then, thou wast my father!

ROBERT.

Well!—Justify it—prove thee in the right—
Make it a lawful thing—a natural thing—
The act of a child!—a good child!—a true child!
An only one!—one parent in the grave,
The other left—that other, a fond father—
A fond, old, doting, idolising father!
Approve it such an act in such a child
To slay that father! Come!

MARIAN.

An oath!—an oath!

ROBERT.

Thy father's life!

MARIAN.

Thy daughter's soul!

ROBERT.

'Twere well
Thy lip had then a little of the thing
The heart had over much of!

MARIAN.

What ?

ROBERT.

Stone !—Rock !
They never should have opened !

MARIAN.

Silence had
Condemned thee equally.

ROBERT.

But not the breath
Mine own life gave !

MARIAN.

I felt in the justice-room
As if the final judgment-day were come,
And not a hiding-place my heart could find
To screen a thought or wish ; but every one
Stood naked 'fore the judge, as now my face
Stands before you ! All things did vanish, father !
That make the interest and substance up
Of human life—which, from the mighty thing
That once was all in all, was shrunk to nothing,
As by some high command my soul received,
And could not but obey, it did cast off
All earthly ties, which, with their causes, melted
Away !—And I saw nothing but the Eye
That seeth all, bent searchingly on mine,
And my lips oped as not of their own will
But of a stronger—I saw nothing then

But that all-seeing Eye—but now I see
Nothing but my father! (*She rushes towards him, and throws her arms round his neck.*)

ROBERT.

Hold off!—thou adder!
Sting me, and think to coil about me still
With thy loathsome folds! Think I will suffer thee!
Not grasp thee!—pluck thee from me!—dash thee to
The earth!

MARIAN.

O! no!

ROBERT.

Unloose thy coil!—my flesh
Creeps at thee! Hear'st thou? Come—let go thy hold
Or I will do some violence to thee!

MARIAN.

Do!

ROBERT.

Strike thee!

MARIAN.

Do!—Dead!—Dead!—'twere merciful.

ROBERT.

No; suffer thee to live that thou may'st see
My execution.

MARIAN.

O! is it thy child
Thou speakest to?

ROBERT.

Let go, or I will curse thee!

MARIAN.

Do! so thou sufferest me to cling to thee!
O! can you think I swore it with my will!
That I—thy child—thy Marian—all my life
Good to thee—was I not?—and loving to thee!
Dost not believe I love thee?—What!—that I—
Who'd suffer torture—death—ten thousand deaths
To save thy life—would swear thy life away
Willingly? willingly?—oh in my heavy strait,
To be an instrument of justice 'gainst thee,
That makes me wish—and I do wish it—thou
Hadst never given me being!—bear not thus
Unsufferably hard upon thy child!—
Thy child, as ever!—Whatsoe'er she did!
Whatsoe'er thou hast done!—That loves thee—dotes
Upon thee! honours!—idolises thee,
As e'er did child her father!

ROBERT.

Let me go!
Or as I'm here—and am a murder'd man—
Murder'd by thee;—I'll curse thee!—let me go!—

THIRD BAILIFF.

(*entering with a paper, which he gives to the first Bailiff.*)
The order of committal!

MARIAN (*to Bailiff*).

Stop!—a minute!

ROBERT.

Or loose thy hold, or bide my curse!

MARIAN.

My Mother!
That is in her grave—who gave me to thee—gave me,
When she had bless'd me on her death-bed, saying
"Be mother, now, and father to our child!"—
For her sake, father! Am I not by her
Enough an orphan!—would I think you would
Be more an orphan than I am?

ROBERT.

Away!

MARIAN.

Both—both my parents lose?

ROBERT.

May—

MARIAN (*shrieks*).

Don't curse me—but I cannot let thee go!— [*Exeunt.*

NORRIS (*coming forward*).

Hold on, old Robert! That's the mood! Hold on!
Rail at her! Spurn her! Curse her! Drive her mad!
The more she's fit for me. Use thy own flesh
Like carrion! Foot it from thee! Lothe it! I'm
The bird will banquet on't!—a father's blood
Must not be shed—although unwittingly—
For nothing!—That's the price which I have paid
For her dark hair, white skin, and shapely limbs;
Her lady face and fairly rounded form!
And I will have them—nor do prize them less
Because her heart would give them to another!

In that's the feast of hate, to taste the joy
That's purchas'd at the cost of those we hate!
When I confess I put the trick upon him
He is free! My motive—love for his fair child
Absolves me.—Then the flight I had prepar'd—
And his own rashness marr'd—is proof enough;
His absence was my aim, and not his death!
They will but chide me, and, at worst, will say
"The scheme was daring!—Yet, a lover's one!"
Between her father's life—my rival's hopes—
She will not pause to choose, but vindicate
At once a daughter's duty, and her love,
And so be mine.

Enter STEPHEN.

Whither so fast, good Stephen?—

STEPHEN.

Where is my master?

NORRIS.

Fast in prison!

STEPHEN.

Where
His daughter?

NORRIS.

Thou hast news,—and it is bad!

STEPHEN.

It is!—Young Edward's ship is cast away
Upon the coast of France, and all the crew,
'Tis said, have perish'd!

NORRIS.

Know'st thou what thou sayst?

STEPHEN.

As thou that hear'st me say it!

NORRIS.

All the crew?

STEPHEN.

All!

NORRIS.

And thou art in search of Marian
To tell her this?

STEPHEN.

I am!

NORRIS.

I'll bring thee to her.
How I do wonder at the news, I know—
Which I myself have spread! I'll bring thee to her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—THE OUTSIDE OF A PRISON—MARIAN BEFORE THE GATE, HALF-RECLINING ON THE GROUND.

MARIAN.

Here is my death-bed. Here I'll stretch myself
And yield my spirit up, for I do feel
I am about to die. I could have borne
The shame of the misdeed that was not mine—
Submitted to it, as the will of Heaven,
Incurring which I had not broke its will—

But that the tie of nature should have snapp'd
Along with that of reverence for Heaven—
That where I found all love—all safeguard once—
I find all loathing—all desertion now,
That is too hard to bear! No kind of shame
That ever made the cheek to redden, while
The heart was free, had made me shrink from him—
Mocks, scorns, repulses, nor annoyances—
I would have cleav'd to him amid the lightnings
Of blasting looks and voices, thundering scorns!
Shared the dark penance of his dungeon with him!
Walk'd with him to the place of execution!
Mounted it step by step along with him!
And, all around him lowering, shone upon him,
Till his last look, with reverence and love!
They shall not shut me from his prison!—have
No right! I am his child! They should not heed
His anger 'gainst me which they do not share,
But I do bear it all! Nor care how high
The surf doth run! It cannot wax so fierce
But I will cleave it rather than remain
Upon this desolate and dreary shore!
Within! within!—Who keeps the gate?

(*Enter Jailor.*)

JAILOR.

What want you?

MARIAN.

Admittance to my father!

JAILOR.

'Tis forbid.

MARIAN.

Open the door a little—do, good sir,
And let me speak with you—give me but a chink
I'll pass through it!

(JAILOR *opens the gate, she tries to pass it, but is prevented. They advance struggling.*)

JAILOR.

What mean you? Are you mad?

MARIAN.

I am! The fury all, without the trance
That makes it bearable! The horror of
The dream, without the sleep! Do you know aught
About the ties of nature? Have you look'd
Upon a living father, mother, brother,
Or sister—or upon a living child
That was your own? I have a living father,
And he's within that prison—and I'm here
His living child, and yearn to go to him!
And you say I cannot! Can you say it? Will you?
Do you? You do not! Cannot! Will not! Oh,
Admit me to my father!

JAILOR.

What's the use?
He'll only drive thee from him!

MARIAN.

Let me in!
I'll find the use. Oh! do you think his heart

Could turn to stone in a moment! Harden so
To the very core, and 'gainst his only child?
Admit me and you'll see it still is flesh;
All flesh—all beating flesh, and at the core
Its inmost—tenderest—warmest part—his child!

JAILOR.

Poor girl!

MARIAN.

You pity me!—Oh! show me pity then—
The act of pity—without which, with all
Its melting looks and tones, its sighs and tears,
'Tis useless as a very beggar, who
Gives all things but the needed thing—relief!
You say "Poor girl!"—and you say true! To be
An orphan!—to be friendless!—shelterless!
To go in rags, and they in tatters! Hang
From morn till morn—from week's end unto week's end,
'Twixt sustenance and starvation!—All of these
Together but a little sprinkling make
Of suffering to the torrent hurl'd on me!
I can't stand under it much longer—now!
My reason totters!—reels! Another moment
I'm a lunatic—O save me from the jacket,
The straw—the whip—the chain—open the door!
Admit me to my father!

JAILOR.

It is hard
To have no option but the act of duty,
When the heart bleeds, and that decides against it.

Poor girl! Though I consort with stone and iron,
My heart partakes not so of their condition
That I can see and hear thee with such eyes
And ears, as walls and bars do turn to misery!
Thou must endure—and heaven support thee under it!
All are denied admittance to his cell,
And thou, I grieve to say it, first of all! (*Going.*)

MARIAN (*stopping him*).

Stay! Let me stop at the door of his cell!—at the end
Of the passage that leads to it!—in the court on which
The passage opens!—on the stairs!—any where
Within the prison!—so that I may be
Under one roof with him! Let me stop with you
At the gate!

JAILOR.

It may not be.

MARIAN.

Show me the window of
His cell! Is it that—or that—which is it?

JAILOR.

Neither.

MARIAN.

Is it that then?

JAILOR.

'Tis not in this quarter of
The prison.

MARIAN.

Which quarter then?

JAILOR.

I may not tell thee.
Don't stop me, girl! I can't stay longer with thee!
Thou quite unman'st me!

MARIAN.

Leave the door ajar—
A moment! Let me look into the prison! (*He shuts the door.*)
Go!—thou dost weep! And think'st thou I'll believe it?
Thou art no better than the grating bolt
That at thy will is shot and holds the door!
I am helpless—hopeless! Would I were the bolt—
Door—walls—bars—any thing but what I am!
And I have put him there!—and if he dies,
I hang him! Who are these that look at me,
As they would strike me dead? I couldn't help it!
My mother train'd me in the fear of God!
I was forced to do it! Just as well might ye blame
A rock to split, when riven by the lightning,
As my lips to part, when in the name of Heaven
The justice bade them ope and speak the truth!
I am innocent!—don't spurn me—I am innocent!

(*Retreats to the wall, and supports herself against it.*)

Enter NORRIS *and* STEPHEN.

NORRIS.

There!—up to her—accost her—tell your news!
What! is it loathing that I feel for her,

Not love? It pleasures me to see her thus.
Except for her I had not done it! That
Is rankling at my heart—sets it in storm!
I'm all for havock! He should die—But then
It were another murder on my soul!

STEPHEN.

Marian!

MARIAN.

Well, Stephen! What of misery more?
For sure it is your errand, by your looks!
Tell me! You can add nothing to the cup
Already that o'erflows! Is it of Edward?
Is he dead?

STEPHEN.

He is! Drown'd on the coast of France.

MARIAN.

I hear it—and I do not shed a tear!
Nor feel the want to weep! I welcome it!
'Tis good news! He has left a world of woe
To him—to him—for what is woe to me
Were woe to him! Would I a heart I love,
As I love his, should feel what mine doth feel?
Would I put adders where I could not bear
To have an insect sting? 'Tis well he's dead!
The friends he leaves, should put on holiday,
Not mourning clothes for him! His passing bell
Should ring a peal, and not a knell! 'Tis best
It is as it is. His welcome home had been

"Heaven help you!"—not "Heaven bless you!"—Well, he's dead!
How was he drowned?

STEPHEN.

His ship, they say, went down
With all the crew.

MARIAN.

With all the crew! He lies
In a watery grave! How fresh he look'd the day
He went!—What hope was in his eye, whose fire
You would have thought would ne'er go out! He seem'd
In speed to meet good fortune, as a friend
Already come in sight!—I see him now
Stepping with gallant air into the boat,
And looking at the sea, as 'twere a thing
Stable as the solid earth!—My sailor lad!
Young, comely, manly, good, and fond of me!
I little thought the look would be my last
Which promised I should see thee soon again.
Thou diest in good time—'tis years of woes
Saved by a minute's pang! I thought just now
I was past weeping! I did love him!—love him
With all my will!—No portion of my heart
But what was given to him—no portion on't
I ever wish'd were back!

NORRIS.

Now is my time!
Marian!

MARIAN.

What ! more ?—Is there more misery ?
There's nothing left but death—I do not count
Death misery !

NORRIS.

I come to talk to thee
Of life, not death !

MARIAN.

Where is it ?—show it me !
Life is the opposite of death—a thing
To be preferr'd to it !—show me that life !—
For if thou mean'st such life as now I see
I had rather die than live !

NORRIS.

I love thee, Marian !

MARIAN.

Does any one love Marian ?

NORRIS.

I repeat
I love thee, Marian, wilt thou marry me ?

MARIAN.

Marry thee ?—Yes ; when they put on for me
My wedding clothes—my shroud !—and lay me in
My bridal bed—my grave ! —Then I'll be wife
To thee or any one !

NORRIS.

What wouldst thou do
To save thy father's life ?

MARIAN.

Any thing!

NORRIS.

What
To have it proved that he is innocent?

MARIAN.

Any thing!—pay the felon's penalty
Myself!—Abide the gibbet!—Marry thee
Now—now!—If now thou didst heave off for me
That mountain on my heart—my father's plight!
That, heavier on my soul—my father's sin!
This didst thou do—and stood my lover there,
Of whom to say that in his grave he's dearer
Than he was ever when in life to me,
Is to say truth—I'd give to thee my hand!

NORRIS.

I take it!—
What! draw'st thou back?

MARIAN.

'Tis but to pause a moment!
No!—I'll see nothing but my father!—Think
There's no one else in the world!—I'll see but him
And the plight he lies in!—deeper—lonelier
Than shipman at the bottom of the sea!
Canst thou do this thou sayest?

NORRIS.

Yes!

MARIAN.

Thou'lt save
My father's life? Thou'lt prove him innocent?

NORRIS.

I will!

MARIAN.

The day thou dost it—I am thine!

NORRIS.

Give me thy hand upon it!—Draw'st thou back
Again?

MARIAN.

No!—There!—One moment!—Edward!—There!

(*Faints in his arms.*)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—THE SHORE.

Enter NORRIS.

IT is a miracle how things that seem
The most perverse, do work unto mine ends!
Entanglement doth set me free as fast
As it doth catch me! His committal, which
I thought had marred me, makes me! He is free!
Hard swearing ope'd at last his dungeon door.
They threatened me with his place, but I escaped
With chiding, and fair Marian is mine,
And this the day I go with her to church!
I would it were to any other place!
I dreamed of her last night. I thought it was
Our wedding day, and, to the church door, I
Was leading her. 'Twas shut! I knocked at it.
One answered from within, "I must not enter!"
And I did shudder, for I knew the voice.
And yet again I knocked. When ope'd the door,
And, fear congealing sight! a spectre glared
Upon me! 'Twas my father! It did say,

" It is forbid—thou must not enter here !"
I woke. It was the first night I had slept,
To call it sleep, since that unlucky night.
Oh ! may I never sleep such sleep again ! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—ROBERT'S COTTAGE.

Enter ROBERT.

ROBERT.

Better I had died ! My child has given her life
To cherish mine ! E'en while I look at her
She wastes away !—and what doth aggravate
The pang to see her fall a prey to death
So fast, is the sweet uncomplaining patience
With which she bears the tooth that's gnawing her,
Working its way into the quick ! She looks
On me, the cause of the inextricable,
Unsufferable strait she has fallen into,
As one to pity rather than to blame !
This is her wedding day !—far better call'd
Her funeral day ! I have left no means untried
To tempt him to forego his claim—he cries
" I have paid the price, and what I've bought I'll take !"
While prayers awaken wrath, and not remorse,
And his eye lowers 'till I think I see
His heart, with evil at the very core.
The hour !—I must awaken her. Her eyes
Were clos'd when last I look'd !—before the time

I would not have them open on the day
They'll see at last too soon!—She has wak'd of herself!
Is up, and dress'd, and smiling, with a cheek
More kin to death than life!—My Marian!

MARIAN (*having entered*).

My father!—what's the matter that you turn
Your eyes away? You falter when you speak!
Father! be cheerful—happy—look upon me!

ROBERT.

My girl, don't smile!

MARIAN.

What my face does, my father,
My heart does!—It is calm!—Yea, cheerful!—not
That it lacks cause for grief—but has more cause
For gladness! I have done what Heaven approves—
My duty!—sacrificed a little thing—
Much in itself, but in comparison
Little—to gain a great thing—to preserve
My father's life!—I should smile!—Let me smile,
And smile along with me!

ROBERT.

My child—my child—
That talk'd to me like an angel!—clung to me!
Knelt to me to persuade me to forbear!
And like a fiend I would not heed, but did
The evil thing, whence all this ruin grew!
My child, who loving me, as she truly said,
And since has proved, beyond her life—did keep

Her reverence for Heaven, when lacking that
She might have sav'd me!—My poor child that I
For doing so her duty, as she ought,
Did spurn—did use with violence—did suffer
To trail along the street, hanging to me!—
Whom I was nigh to curse!—I did not, Marian!
Indeed I did not curse thee!—A child so used!—
To blast her happiness—life—every thing
For me—and do it with a smile!

MARIAN.

My father!
No more of this, beseech thee—these are thoughts
That cannot profit us! and they awaken
Others, 'twere better for our peace we suffer
To sleep!—For they do madden!—Give me thy hand!
Don't speak!—My brain did reel just now!—
'Tis over!—I'll go to the door and see
If he be coming.

ROBERT.

Who?

MARIAN.

The bridegroom!
Since we're to marry, as well marry now
As any other time—— O save me!—Hide me!—

(*Rushing to her father, hides her face in his breast*).

(*Enter* EDWARD).

EDWARD.

My Marian! my girl! my love! my bride!
And is thy joy to see me back so great

It overcomes thee?—Marian, from the hour
We hoisted sail to bring me back to thee,
The wind has never veer'd nor flagg'd—We've had
A merry run of good twelve knots an hour!—
Nothing—sheet, halyard—but the helm to 'tend to
As though the vessel with my heart did race,
That still did keep before it!—Turn to me!—
Look at me!—Speak to me!—The face and voice,
I have heard and seen a thousand miles away—
Now that I'm near to thee—within reach of thee—
Touching thee, Marian!—let me see and hear!
Has she not power to speak or move?

ROBERT.

My boy,—
The sight of thee so sudden is too much for her.

EDWARD.

And does she love me better?—Marian!—
Sweet—constant—fond—could I believe so fond?—
'Twas never thus with thee before at meeting!
Unloose the hands that clasp thy father's neck—
Or, let me do it for thee—'till I fold thee
To my fond, faithful, my adoring heart,
That yearns to have thee near it!—Marian!
Know'st thou not Edward's hand?—Does she resist me?
Is it not joy that works upon her so?
Does my return give pain?—Is it a thing
Unwelcome?—Am I loved no longer by her?
Am I forgotten?—

MARIAN.

Edward—no!—no!—no!
Thou'rt not forgotten.

EDWARD.

No?—Nor lov'd no longer?

MARIAN.

Nor lov'd no longer?—lov'd more dear than ever!—
Than ever, Edward!

EDWARD.

Marian! My love!
My life! the ship is on her course again!
Steady! There's nought ahead!—fool that I was
To fancy there were breakers!—Come, my girl!
Sit on my knee and talk to me! 'tis long
Since we have talk'd together, Marian!
Dost thou hold off?—I have been so long away
You are asham'd to sit upon my knee.
Well! There! What you like I like! Though you've sat
Often upon my knee. Well! I have made
My luckiest voyage!—our pence have grown to pounds!

MARIAN.

We heard that you were shipwreck'd!

EDWARD.

Ay!

MARIAN.

Were drowned!

EDWARD.

You took me for my ghost!—no wonder, girl,
You ran away from me! Oh now I see!

We've not touch'd ground we did not wish to touch !—
Nor shipp'd a sea since first we hoisted sail !
And now we marry, Marian !—What's the matter ?
How ill you look !—What's this ?—You shrink from me !
Has she been ailing, father ?—Where are her eyes ?—
I left her with a rose upon her cheek,
Where is it ? That is not the form I clasp'd
A month ago !—What's fallen ? Something ! Ay !
Something! What is it ?—both are silent !—Then
Something I know has fallen ! To look at you
Is enough—enough !—'twill drive me mad !—I am mad !
Tell me the truth !—Nay then I'll seek for it
Where I'm more like to find it.

MARIAN.

Stop ! Come back !—
No !—Stay !—Forgive me, Edward ! (*falling on her knees.*)

EDWARD.

Marian !
Forgive thee ! —Why ? For what ?

MARIAN.

Don't ask ! To sea !
On shipboard, and set sail, whate'er the wind,—
Anything, Edward, but the shore !—To sea !—
Rocks, breakers, sands, are nothing !—all the perils
Of leaks, dismasting, canvass blown to threads,
Are nothing !—Foundering !—the dismal'st plight,
That ever bark was in, are nothing !—Yea
Drowning, with thoughts of going deeper down
Than ever plummet sounded, or of graves

Made of the throats of sea monsters, that dog
The fated vessel!—Leap into them sooner
Than trust thy feet on land!—To sea!—To sea!

EDWARD.

What mean you?

MARIAN.

I will tell while I can!

EDWARD.

Rise up then, and don't kneel to me!

MARIAN.

Forgive me!

EDWARD.

For what?

MARIAN.

Ay that's the thing, you can't forgive me
Until you know for what, and when you know it,
Will you forgive me then?—You will not! Yet
Were it my last breath that I speak with to thee
I love thee dear as ever!—dearer!—dearer!—
I love thee dearer than I ever did!—

EDWARD.

Then where's the harm?

MARIAN.

Where?—every where!—The sun
Is pale and cold! there is a haze in the sky,
Chilly and thick, will never clear away!
The earth is wither'd, grass, leaves, flowers and all;
Women and men are chang'd, all cheer and comfort
Departed from their faces and their tongues,

To me!—for thou that mid'st all these to me
Art lost!—

EDWARD.

Am I not faithful to thee still?

MARIAN.

Thou art, and I am faithful still to thee!
But!—

EDWARD.

What?

MARIAN.

Oh! father!

ROBERT.

Well thou may'st reproach me!

MARIAN.

No!—no! I don't reproach thee; tell it him—
Stop! he will know it soon enough—he's here!

(*Enter* NORRIS *and others, dressed as for a Wedding.*)

NORRIS.

Marian!—What! Edward living!—ay, and here!

EDWARD.

It dawns upon me! Dawns?—'Tis open day!—
A stormy one, the sky all black, the sea
All foam, all things portending shipwreck! shipwreck
Already come! binnacle wash'd away!
Rudder unshipp'd! not a mast standing! nothing
But the hull! the lonesome, melancholy hull!
With mountains breaking over it!—She's chang'd!
She's false! She's lost! I live and she is lost!

NORRIS.

Come!

EDWARD.

Will she go to him before my face?
She will!—She does!—Will she go forth with him?
Go forth with him to church, and leave me here?
She's gone!—Come death! Well! I'm ashore again!
What I did wish for every hour in the day!
Every minute!—Pray for! dream upon! live upon!—
More than on food or drink, with hope to get it,
I have got at last!—I am on shore again!
Better be at the bottom of the sea!
What's to be done?—Can any thing be done?—
My destiny's too hard to bear, and yet
I must bear it!—To be mad! O to be mad!—
How can my senses stand it?—What are they made of?
Why don't they go to pieces?—Not one plank
Holding by another! All toss'd here and there
In splinters!—Splinters!—Come, there's comfort in
The knowledge of the cause that wreck'd the ship.
That I will force from her, and then I'll leave her—
Leave every thing!—Leave her, leave everything! [*Exit.*

SCENE THE LAST.—THE OUTSIDE OF A CHURCH.

Enter CLERGYMAN, NORRIS, MARIAN, ROBERT, *and others.*

CLERGYMAN.

These nuptials are not things of lucky omen.

NORRIS.

I pay no heed to omens!

CLERGYMAN.

Marriage is
A holiday—a day of gladness, though
We drop a tear in't!—Bright looks are its favours!
Lightness of gait, and ease of carriage, are
Its proper dress!—This maid has none of them!

NORRIS.

She weds of her free will.

CLERGYMAN.

You are the bridegroom.

NORRIS.

There stands her father—question him!

CLERGYMAN.

Methinks
You look not like a bridegroom; no, nor speak!
There's sullenness upon your brow and tongue,
Care at the heart's core, if not something worse!
His marriage-day is still the merriest
A lover keeps; it is his harvest home,
When blights, and winds, and autumn floods are scap'd,
And all the venture of his tillage housed,
With song and dance and thankful merry-making.
'Tis strange! but, it is your affair, not mine.
You are her father! Gives the maid her hand
Of her free will?

ROBERT.

She does; against her choice,
She gives her hand, although it breaks her heart.

Your Reverence must have heard, he holds her promise
His price for service rendered unto me,
By which her hand she gives, disjoining it
From her heart, long given to another. Tears,
Entreaties, prayers, all means I have tried, to shake
His stubborn purposes, and to pity bend him—
All thrown away! yet have resolves the strongest
Given way at last; perhaps the hour, the place
Thy sacred presence, these perhaps may give
A sway to that was powerless before!
Look on me, Norris! I'm a father; see
To what a strait I'm brought, upon my knees
Before thee in the dust! Turn to my child—
Upon her death-bed could she look more white?
More ghastly, more like death? She loves thee not!
To save her father—a father less to her
Than she a child to him—she's in the plight
That brings her hither, if she marries thee
It is not with her heart! Don't take her hand!
Take that, thou tak'st her life along with it!
Thou lay'st a corpse upon thy bridal bed,
And not a bride! O! spare her! spare my child!
Spare me in her!—thyself! forego thy claim!
Release her from the word she will not break,
Though keeping it her thread of life will snap!
Release her from it!—give a young girl her life!—
Preserve the remnant of an old man's life!
And make thyself, if not a happy man,
At least a man contented with himself;

Who else, must needs become a verier wretch,
Than any that he makes!—

NORRIS.

I am here to wed!—

CLERGYMAN.

Stern man, look here!—thine eyes may serve the place
Of ears, no need of them to learn the cause
Of that poor supplicant! What hast thou heard
Of misery that e'er came up to that?
Plead tears as strong, as she doth plead without?
Sighs? groans?—all things that serve as tongues to grief?
She looks despair, as never yet was told
By doleful sound! Art thou a man or what?
What keeps thee rock, when all around thee melt?
Shake! fall to pieces at the spectacle
Which most ought thee to move? Hast thou no touch
Of Earth or Heaven, which all men have beside?
So to contrast with all? Thou livest and breath'st—
By Him thou liv'st and breath'st by, I adjure thee
Forego the hand which He forbids thee take!

NORRIS.

I am the bridegroom, there's the bride; she weds
Of her free will; though hearts go not with hands,
No reason why they may not follow them.
I love her—I will have her—and I take her!

EDWARD (*rushing in*).

Angel!—I know it all!—but know not tongue
Can speak the beauty of so fair a deed!
Self-sacrific'd to save thy father's life

The fairest barque that ever mounted wave
From duty run upon the foulest shore!
Art thou a man! (*to Norris*).—O, reverend Sir, to proof
Without the church let me his manhood put,
And see if in my frame that fibre lives
So basely weak 'twill yield, till at my feet
His claim upon the maiden he renounce!
It is not reverence to Heaven, to stand
And see it outraged in the thing it loves,
Through reverence to Heaven's servant or Heaven's house!
Norris, come forth!

NORRIS.

Yes! when I lead, a wife,
Thy Marian from the church.

EDWARD.

She is not mine!—
I do forego the maid, do thou forego
Her hand! If hate for me—loathing to see
The maiden mine—constrains thee to an act
To which a murder were an innocent deed,
I give her up! Pluck up my hopes, although
Their roots have struck to my heart's core, and cast
Away that they shall never flower again
But wither, die and, rot!—O, give her up,
And take whate'er by years of toil I have made!
If that sufficeth not, take me along
To labour for thy gain to my life's end,
To do thy bidding whatsoe'er it be,
On land or sea—how far soe'er away!

To be thy journeyman will labour through
The four and twenty hours, without repose
Or food, and set to work when they are out—
Only give up the maid, her word—her peace—
Her patience—reason—life!

CLERGYMAN.

No violence!—Or is her reason gone,
Or she is in a trance?

MARIAN.

'Tis coming!—

NORRIS.

What?

CLERGYMAN.

Peace!

MARIAN.

How it scowls all around! The sea is black
As the sky! From head to head as black as ink!
There comes the wind! You see!—that streak of white
Along the horizon!—it grows larger!—See!—
And larger!—That's the wind! 'tis coming on,
Pacing the waves, and stirring up the spray,
As horses do the dust when they're in speed!
You hear it now!—and now the sea is white
As it was black before!

ROBERT.

Something like this
Occurr'd last night, but I did rouse her, and
Recall her to herself.

NORRIS.

This is no time
For list'ning to a dream!

CLERGYMAN.

Speak'st thou again!
I'll cause them put thee from the church by force!
I'll hear the dream out, if it be a dream!
If that her senses are unsettled, you're
Forbid to take her hand!—I charge you, peace!

MARIAN.

It lightens! but—'tis distant!—And it thunders—
Only you cannot hear it!—for the sea
Doth now begin to roar! You'll hear it, though,
Anon!—'tis coming, listen! Hold your breath
Don't speak! I heard a gun!—there 'tis
Again! And there's the ship, rounding the head,
Rising and pitching, and no pity takes
The storm upon her; but more furious waxes—
And billow after billow, fore-top high,
Do break upon her!

CLERGYMAN.

If I hear thee breathe,
I'll force thee from the church!

MARIAN.

She strikes! She's fast!
And now the waves do with her what they will!
She's gone to pieces!—Pieces!—What is this?
A body wash'd on shore, and Norris there,
Rifling it! Ha! he stops!—he is alarmed!

He sees that life is in it! What is that
He does? He has unclasp'd a knife! He means
To murder the poor man!—He will!—He does!
Stop! Norris!—'tis thy father!

NORRIS.

Furies! fiends!
What mean you?

CLERGYMAN.

Thou dost shake! The blood is gone
Even from thy very lips! while all beside
Look as they look'd before! Thou'rt a bad man!

NORRIS.

What heeds a raving girl?

MARIAN.

Where have I been?—
The church? Oh! I remember!—All is right!—
Here, Norris, take my hand!

(*They approach the altar*—WOLF *rises*—NORRIS *lets go* MARIAN'S *hand, and retreats several paces—the rest pause.*)

NORRIS.

Hell! what is here?
Like something from a grave, or from the sea
Cast up untimely and unnaturally;
Or, worse, a prisoner from the evil place,
If such there be, let out to harrow me
Before my time—affright me into madness!

EDWARD.

Speak not! observe!

NORRIS.

Wolf!——Wolf!——It is his eyes—
Features—but not the life that moved in them—
His form without his blood! Is it a thing
That breathes, or only would be thought to breathe?
Wolf!—I would rush upon it, but my fears
Are bolts that pin me to the spot! Is it come
To tell upon me? Cause of blame to him
I gave not; he went cramm'd with gold away!

EDWARD (*to* CLERGYMAN).

Do you hear?—That man has been a partner with him
In some black deed!

WOLF.

I have fled over sea, over land,
To get away from it!—It follows me!
I have plunged into riot—I have tried
What solitude would do!—It talks to me!
I see it in the dead of night as well
As in the noon of day. 'Tis only here
I have got a respite from it yet! In crowds
I have been alone, with it glaring upon me,
Gnashing its teeth, and yelling in mine ears!
But there's another here doth come between
With mild regards, and placid shining face,
And gentle voice which makes, albeit so soft,
My torturers unheard, crying "Repent!
Confess!—Repent! Confess!"

NORRIS.

Confess!

WOLF.

I will
Repent, I will confess!—then am I free!
I am a murderer.

NORRIS.

Be thou the fiend—I'll know thee! (*rushing up and seizing him.*)
Wolf!

WOLF.

Norris!—What, has it been following thee?

NORRIS.

Peace!

WOLF (*furiously*).

But there is no peace! It howls, and howls,
No foot is fleet enough to distance it,
To 'scape the horror of its teeth;—the bloodhound,—
No stream that you can wade will clear thee from,—
That never gives you respite!—except here!
Here is a chance! This is a place methinks
He cannot enter; he has hunted me
Till he has driv'n me wild, but since I'm here
His bay methinks begins to die away.
Words have been whispered me, at hearing which
'Twas told me he would slacken in his chase.—
"Repent!—Confess!" those were the words I heard.
I will!—I do!—I am a murderer.

NORRIS.

Coward, where is my gold?

WOLF.

All clotted o'er
Corroded, crumbled with the old man's blood
Which thou lett'st out, and I did leave to spill!—

NORRIS.

Fiend!

WOLF.

Do not rave at me! I did not know
It was your father!

EDWARD.

Hear ye?

NORRIS.

Villain!—die!
With a lie in thy throat! (*stabs* WOLF.)

CLERGYMAN.

Stop, wretch!

WOLF.

Thou hast murdered me!
And but for thee I had not murdered him!
But in my soul's strait on the brink of death
I'll show thee ruth as I do hope to me
That mercy will be shown!—"Repent! Confess!"
I hear not now the hound!—'twill stop with thee
If there be mercy for a parricide! (*Dies.*)

NORRIS.

You would not listen to a lunatic!

CLERGYMAN.

At least, unhappy! thou'rt a murderer!

NORRIS.

Which of you would not kill a mad dog? Come!
You've no right to hold me! Show me first
Your warrant, without which you cannot take
A man that's free to prison!—Just as well
Hang me without a trial!—Let me breathe!
Give me a moment's pause!—let my arms free!
Oh, could I use them now! The blackest curse
That lips can utter—heart conceive—alight
On all who enter there!—May the roof fall
And bury you alive—may it be in flames!
And every door and window fast upon you!
My blood lie at your doors!—the best among ye
Is worse than I! My blood be on you all!

(*He is dragged out.*)

CLERGYMAN.

Poor sinner! Grace is broad and free enough
Even to cover thee, so mayst thou find —
Pattern of love,and piety, and duty,
Surely in heaven thou wouldst have been rewarded?
But heaven defers its guerdon for thee there,
To give thee one on earth! Be blest in love!

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

OLD MAIDS:

A Comedy.

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

AUTHOR OF "VIRGINIUS," "THE HUNCHBACK," ETC.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
MDCCCXLI.

LONDON :
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

TO

ROBERT DICK, ESQ.,

OF

LOCH ARD LODGE, NEAR ABERFOYLE, BY STIRLING,

This Comedy

IS AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

CHARACTERS.

Sir Philip Brilliant	*Mr. C. Mathews.*
Master Blount	*Mr. F. Matthews.*
John Blount	*Mr. Harley.*
Thomas Blount	*Mr. G. Vandenhoff.*
Robert	*Mr. W. Lacey.*
Bernard	*Mr. Ayliff.*
Harris	*Mr. Honner.*
Stephen	*Mr. W. Payne.*
Jacob	*Mr. Wigan.*
William	*Mr. Kerridge.*
Lady Blanche	*Madame Vestris.*
Lady Anne	*Mrs. Nisbett.*
Mistress Blount	*Mrs. W. West.*
Charlotte	*Mrs. Humby.*
Jane	*Miss Lee.*

OLD MAIDS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Room in Sir Philip Brilliant's *House.*

Enter Bernard *and* Harris.

HARRIS.

What time to-morrow?

BERNARD.

At noon, I told thee, he sets off. Be thou forthcoming an hour before at the latest; and mind no item be wanting. We lack leisure for mistakes.

HARRIS.

I shall be careful. How takes he this route to Ireland?

BERNARD.

As he takes everything—with an even temper.

HARRIS.

He goes not there to sleep.

BERNARD.

No; when he ought to be awake—but he will lose no wink of rest that a proper man should profit by; no more

than he will step aside to avoid watching, toil, or peril; which he will share with the meanest soldier in his regiment. Sir Philip Brilliant is a butterfly in the drawing-room, but a man in the field. His nature is of the true stuff! He is a blade of proof in a dainty scabbard; you may laugh at the scabbard, but you won't at the blade.

HARRIS.

And takes he this expedition so coolly?

BERNARD.

Coolly?—Judge of the fever it throws him into, when I tell you he has been occupied this hour past in trying on a new suit, with which he means to affront all comparison to-day, for its fashion and splendour. Let us be gone. Here he comes.

HARRIS.

And with him Master Robert, his valet. What a pleasant incontinent rogue that Master Robert is!

BERNARD.

Ay, but a frank one, and honest withal—a rogue for the humour only.

HARRIS.

I will tell you a trick he played me.

BERNARD.

Nay; if you begin with his tricks, there will never be an end.

HARRIS.

But I must tell thee.

BERNARD.

Well; be it as we pass to the door, then. Quick! They are here.

[BERNARD *and* HARRIS *go out.*

Enter SIR PHILIP *and* ROBERT.

SIR PHILIP.

Now, Robert, for I know you have an eye,
Examine me. Scan me from head to foot
And round about, and say how fits my dress,
And as you love me, Robert, use your skill.
Lie the seams fair? Sits any part awry?
Observe the buttons their due distances?
The slashes their proportions and their places?
The skirts their lengths and uniformity?
Lurks anywhere a wrinkle or a crease?
Find me a fault, dear Robert, if you can.

ROBERT.

The suit, methinks, is perfect.

SIR PHILIP.

Look again
And jealously! Find me a fault, I'll find
A crown for you.

ROBERT.

Sooner I'd miss the fault
Than get the crown.

SIR PHILIP.

I know thy honesty.
But find the fault although thou get'st the crown.

ROBERT.

What's that?

SIR PHILIP

What, Robert?

ROBERT.

If I may believe
My eyes—

SIR PHILIP.

Be sure thou mayst, if 'tis a fault
Thou think'st thou seest.

ROBERT.

'Tis a fault I see!

SIR PHILIP.

What is it?

ROBERT.

Yet, perhaps, 'tis not a fault.

SIR PHILIP.

It must be one! Thou'rt not inclined to see it,
And, therefore, doubt'st it! What is it?

ROBERT.

Alas!
It is a fault.

SIR PHILIP.

A great or little one?
Don't keep me in suspense; I'm on the rack!
Well, Robert, well!

ROBERT.

It is a little fault;
A very little fault—a wrinkle only
About an inch, a quarter, and a tenth
In length.

SIR PHILIP.

Were it the tenth without the rest
It spoils the suit—off with't! It shall go back!

ROBERT.

It much becomes you! Well the colour sorts
With your complexion!—and the pattern flogs
All past achievements of the shaping art!

And 'tis a dress of excellent proportions,
Sets off your person to unmatch'd advantage.
Look at the sleeve alone!—How plain it shows
The tailor tax'd his brains!

SIR PHILIP.

Where lies the wrinkle?

ROBERT.

Here, near the seam of the left shoulder.

SIR PHILIP.

That's
A place a wrinkle may have leave to come!
Canst help the wrinkle? There's the piece I promised
For finding it. If thou canst help it, now,
That piece will find a fellow.

ROBERT.

I will try.
I will not promise you I shall succeed.
Stand straight and still. Now, please you, raise your arm;
Now put it down again—Upon my life
'Tis growing less.

SIR PHILIP.

Well done, good Robert.

ROBERT.

'Tis
Almost away!

SIR PHILIP.

Say it is quite away,
I'll give thee the third piece.

ROBERT.

I would I could;
No hope of that, I fear! A wrinkle is

A stubborn thing! Eh?—What?—I must be blind!
Why, where is it?

SIR PHILIP.

Is't gone?

ROBERT.

I am bewitch'd!
Is aught the matter, think you, with my sight?
Or that is gone, or else the wrinkle's gone;
So gone, I swear I cannot find the place!
I can't believe there ever was a wrinkle!

SIR PHILIP.

Good Robert, there are the two crowns.

ROBERT.

Dear sir,
I don't deserve them.

SIR PHILIP.

Nay!—

ROBERT.

Indeed I don't.

SIR PHILIP.

I'll not believe thee.

ROBERT.

Nay, I swear I don't.
I must have fancied that there was a wrinkle.

SIR PHILIP.

Robert, a virtue may become a vice,
Carried too far! Thou art too honest, Robert.

ROBERT.

Nay, hear me, sir!

SIR PHILIP.

I won't! There was a wrinkle!

Did I not set me on my perfect poise?
Stood I not motionless as block of stone?
Then at thy bidding raised I not my arm,
And lower'd it again, while thou didst jerk
My skirts to take the wrinkle out?—and now
Persuade me there was none! There was a wrinkle!
I will not hear thee!—Peace! So Lady Blanche
And Lady Anne were in the Park to-day!
How look'd fair Lady Blanche?

ROBERT.

Oh, charmingly!
But her companion were the maid for me;
I love her lip of scorn! It dares a man!

SIR PHILIP.

That's shrewdly felt! He were a man indeed
That carried her! That man is yet to come!
She glories in her single state; and train'd
To mastery in studies men affect,
And seldom progress in as well as she,
Looks down on all our sex o'erbearingly,
And leaves the field to lovely Lady Blanche,
Who, though she smiles on courtship, looks as cold
On matrimony as her scornful friend;
While troops besiege her—I among the rest.
But now good-bye to Venus! Mars commands!
Be ready, Robert, for the route to-morrow!
We march at one; meanwhile to Ludgate Hill
I go, that careless artisan to chide
My beaver jewel who so slightly set,
I lost it in the street. Men call me fop,
And so I am, so will be, and why not?

It is my humour! Better fop than fool;
And he's a fool that does not please himself.
And so the more they smile, the more they may;
The more I 'll give them cause, and smile myself,
Sitting at ease in mine own snug content,
Wearing a cheery, frank, and saucy cheek!
Now tell me, Robert, what men say of me?
What comeliness they give me credit for
Besides my person, which I know will pass?

ROBERT.

They say, though rather vain, you are very brave.

SIR PHILIP.

What is it to be brave? I give Heaven thanks
I was not born a spaniel!—What had I
To do with that? Find something of mine own
For which they praise me, I will thank them then!
What say they to my gait? I made my gait
Myself! There's matter in men's gait, good Robert!
Therein you have the impress of their callings;
There is the clerk's gait, which implies obedience;
The shopkeeper's, half service, half command;
The merchant's, o'er-revolving speculations;
The lawyer's, quick and keen at quirks and flaws;
The student's, ponderous as piles of folios;
The courtier's, supple, prompt for courtesies;
The soldier's, keeping time with drums and trumpets;
And twenty others—all most common-place!
But there's one gait that's paramount of all—
The gentleman's, that speaks not any calling;
Shows him at liberty to please himself;
And while it meditates offence to none,

Observes a proper negligence towards all,
And imperturbable complacency !

[*They go out.*

SCENE II.

MASTER BLOUNT'S *House.—A Room contiguous to his Shop.*

Enter JOHN BLOUNT *and* THOMAS BLOUNT.

THOMAS.

I will not bide the baiting of thy tongue !—
I say, I will not !—Let my father rail,
I 'll hear him patiently. I owe not thee
Observance !—What 's the year or two thou hast
The start of me ?

JOHN.

I speak but for thy good.

THOMAS.

Nay, not for that ! Thou wouldst speak kindly else !
The fault thou find'st would reach no ear but mine ;
I know thee, brother ; my defect thou makest
A finger-post to show thine own deserts,
To win me anger, while thyself win'st praise !
I know thee, John !—I say no more of this ;
I will not bear it !—should not !—I 'm a man !

JOHN.

Wilt strike me ?

THOMAS.

Heaven forbid my mother's son
Should e'er get blow from me. I tell thee what,
Thou aim'st at empire of my father's heart !
Thou to my father's business wouldst be heir !

Be so!—Thou ne'er shalt find in me a let.
His stock-in-trade, good-will, whate'er he hath
Pertaining to his craft, or grown from it,
I freely from this hour renounce all share in!
I 'll seek my fortune!—Here I will not stay
To play the money-grub—while men, not made
Of better metal, find themselves a name
That lifts them 'bove their birth!

Enter Master Blount.

MASTER BLOUNT.

How 's this?—at words?
Thy brother John has been reproving thee,
And thou resistest him—and wherefore, son?
Because he 's right, and thou art in the wrong!
The counter, boy!—go practise patience there!
'Twas that which made thy father, with the help
Of industry. 'Tis roof, son; bed and board,
With which 'tis well thou art provided, else
Thou ne'er hadst earn'd them, Thomas, for thyself!

THOMAS.

I might have earn'd them, had I been allow'd!

MASTER BLOUNT.

Allow'd?

THOMAS.

To earn them in the way I could!

MASTER BLOUNT.

Thou'dst be a soldier, or wouldst go to sea—
Chimeras evermore of boyhood's brain!

JOHN.

I never knew them, father.

MASTER BLOUNT.

Never, John ;
Thou ever didst my wish, and didst it well.

JOHN.

And found my own in it. Except for sleep
And meals, I never took an hour from work,
Nor would, suppose I might—nor cared I what
You set me to—the crucible, the vice,
The desk or counter—'twas your will, and done.

MASTER BLOUNT.

Ay, John, you are a pattern of a boy !
Go, Thomas ! copy by your elder brother !
Demean yourself submissively to him ;
Remembering thou dost thy father's will !

THOMAS.

I love my father ! Would that I could love
My father's craft—but that I cannot love !

[*Goes out following* JOHN.—*Enter* MISTRESS BLOUNT.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Heard I not words ? I did !—what 's wrong with Thomas ?
John has been chafing him again ! He 's not
The boy to bear it, nor is 't right he should.
The shop don't fit him, husband ! Thou wouldst put
Thy turnspit to his use, thy hound to his.
Did any counsel thee, exchange their work ;
Thou'dst think him fool, didst thou not call him one !
Thy cart-horse foal when thou didst set to cart,
Thou didst the thing was wise !—as wisely didst
To break thy jennet's filly for the saddle ;
As beast of draught she were not worth her meat !
Givest ear to me ? Dost weigh my words ?

MASTER BLOUNT.

I do.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

And if thou dost, thou wilt not find them light.
And dost perceive the sequel?

MASTER BLOUNT.

No.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

I am sure
Thou dost not! Never canst thou see the thing
That lies not straight before thee. Ope thine eyes,
And I will put the sequel in their range
Point blank! Men vary more than horse or dog.
Not as the parentage the progeny!
The noble's cradle rocks a churl—the churl's
A nobleman! A simple craftsman thou,
Hast son the craft was never made would fit;—
And he must drudge because his father did!

MASTER BLOUNT.

Drudge, dost thou say?

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Ay, drudge! and say 't again.

MASTER BLOUNT.

His brother drudges.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

So his brother may:
It is his humour; he 's his father's son.

MASTER BLOUNT.

Whom takes the other after?

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Whom?—why me!
I tell thee, Thomas is his mother's son,

No handicraft will he make progress in;
Money he values for the using on't—
Would buy a coach and horses in the time
Thou balancest the outlay of a truck!

MASTER BLOUNT.

A hopeful son, methinks, has Master Blount,
The Ludgate jeweler.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Most hopeful, John;
But not in the shape thou wishest hope to come in,
With sleek comb'd hair and ponderous busy brow,
Scanning a bodkin to resolve him whether
'Tis gold or pinchbeck!—I forgot!—Thy hope
Hath comely apron on!—Now look at mine!
A youth of standard height! proportion'd well
In trunk and limb! Of handsome face and bold!
Very! A cap and plume upon his head,
Across his field of breast a scarf and belt,
And in the belt a sword, as fits a man!

MASTER BLOUNT.

What cavalier is this?

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

What cavalier?
Thou knowest not thine own son, husband John!
I lose all patience with thee! Listen now!
Thou hast a son whom fortune meant to climb,
And thou wouldst have to creep!—What use is he
In thy shop or workshop, where thou cast'dst him when
He came from school, as metal that is fused
Into the mould, thinking he'd take what shape
It pleased thee give him?—Flesh and blood are not

So passive, John !—How little knowest thou,
Dear John, beyond thy trade ! Nine months ago
Lapsed his apprenticeship of seven long years,
And earns he now the keep of journeyman ?
No !—do I blame him ? No !—when thou get'st gold
To do the work of lead, I 'll blame him, John,
But not till then.

MASTER BLOUNT.

The fault is thine.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Is mine !
Am I in fault ?

MASTER BLOUNT.

I say—

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Am I in fault ?

MASTER BLOUNT.

I won't say fault.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Go on.

MASTER BLOUNT.

Thou hast him taught
The ways of gentleman. Contents thee not
He learn our homely measures, he must skip
As courtiers do, so thou providest him with
A foreign dancing-master ! Not enough
The jockey taught his brother should teach him,
Behoves him have a soldier's seat, and so
Thou get'st a regimental riding-master !

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Proceed, good husband John.

MASTER BLOUNT.

It pleased thee not
Dick Cottingham should teach him quarter-staff—

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Dick Cottingham !—I'd beat Dick Cottingham
At quarter-staff myself !—

MASTER BLOUNT.

Thou must employ
Professionals in that.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Teach a boy right,
Or not at all ! Go on !

MASTER BLOUNT.

From quarter-staff
He needs must to the rapier go.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

No doubt !

MASTER BLOUNT.

The which—not satisfied the boy should get
A simple notion on't—he practises
Till he can beat his master.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Art not glad
Of that ?—Art thou not glad on't, husband John ?
The day will come, and mind my words it will,
When thou wilt chuckle at it !—chuckle, husband !
Thy boy can beat his master !—who'll beat him ?

MASTER BLOUNT.

John is as good a boy !

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Who cheapens John ?

What loss to him his brother gets his due?
He likes the inside of the counter!—Well,
He has it!—Thomas likes the other side!
And yet thou know'st not John!—Though he's my son,
He 's cunning. 'Tis not natural in one
So young in years to be in acts so old.
The husbandman prefers a backward spring!
The fruit is doubted comes before its time!
Did John observe thee less, 'twould please me more!
What wouldst thou say now should I tell thee plain
His fancies look a mile beyond the shop,
In which thou think'st his heart wrapp'd wholly up?
'Tis so; he'd laugh to throw the apron off
He smiles at putting on!

MASTER BLOUNT.

Thou wrong'st him, wife.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Believe so, as thou wilt—let me know Thomas.
He'll ne'er ply craft, but be a gentleman.
That time is come with you, and still you toil.

MASTER BLOUNT.

I'll think on what thou say'st.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

So, husband, do.
The man who has a wife hath counsel, John,
At hand that's ever better than his own! [*Goes out.*

SIR PHILIP BRILLIANT (*without*).

Within is he? Then I'll step in to him.

MASTER BLOUNT.

Sir Philip Brilliant!—He speaks angrily.

SIR PHILIP (*entering*).

How comes it, Master Blount, you treat me thus?
Why callest thou thyself a jeweler,
And set'st a gem so carelessly, as soon
As worn, 'tis lost? Where is the brilliant, sir,
I paid thee down a hundred crowns for? Look!
'Tis gone (*showing his hat*).

MASTER BLOUNT.

I see it is, and grieve for it.

SIR PHILIP.

Wilt thou replace it?

MASTER BLOUNT.

Is it fit I should?

SIR PHILIP.

Yes; for you set it.

MASTER BLOUNT.

Yes; and set it well!

SIR PHILIP.

Well, Master Blount! Set'st thou a jewel well,
And falls it out as soon as set?

MASTER BLOUNT.

The loop
You must have strain'd!—You flung your beaver down,
And gave it blow, perhaps; or doffing it
Too freely, swung'st against a wall or rail,
And shook'st, thyself, the jewel from its seat.

SIR PHILIP.

Not so I doff my beaver!—throw it down!
'Sdeath, Master Blount, thou think'st it not enough
Through fault of thee I lose a peerless gem—
Thou must disparage, too, my bearing, sir!

My carriage, sir, wherein I stand alone,
Which prize beyond a mine—ay, mines of gems!
I fling my beaver down?—I strike a wall
Or rail, in doffing it? I?—I?—The gem
I might forgive, but can't pass over that!
Down, sir, and beg my pardon!

THOMAS (*coming forward*).

He shall not!
The gem was fitly set.

SIR PHILIP.

How knowest thou?

THOMAS.

My father says it!—That the gem was lost,
Was fault of thine alone.

SIR PHILIP.

Do you know me?

THOMAS.

Yes.

SIR PHILIP.

I know thou dost; yet knowing it, I doubt
Through wonder at thy boldness, sirrah!

THOMAS.

What!

SIR PHILIP.

Knows't thou what cuffs are?

THOMAS.

Yes; I have given them!

SIR PHILIP.

Ay?
'Tis time thou learn to take them.

THOMAS.

Thou'rt not he
Can teach me that.

SIR PHILIP (*aside to him*).

Ay ?—Thou prefer'st perhaps
A higher lesson. Canst thou use a sword ?

THOMAS (*aside to* PHILIP).

By trying thou canst judge.

SIR PHILIP (*aside to* THOMAS).

If worthy one,
Thou'lt steal a rapier out and follow me
A pace beyond the wall—I 'll wait thee there. [*Goes out.*

MASTER BLOUNT.

What said he, Thomas ?

THOMAS.

Something—nothing, sir.
His fault methinks he half begins to see.
That errand, brother, you would send me on,
I hasten now to do.

MASTER BLOUNT.

What errand, Thomas ?

THOMAS.

John will inform you, sir. [*Goes out.*

MASTER BLOUNT.

What is it, John ?

JOHN.

I vow he has scared my memory out of me.

MASTER BLOUNT.

What errand has thy brother gone upon ?

JOHN.

I vow I have forgot.

MASTER BLOUNT.

There 's something more
Than he would let me see.—Thy cap, boy, haste,
While I get mine, for we must after him ! [*They go out.*

SCENE III.

The outside of London Wall.—Enter SIR PHILIP BRILLIANT.

SIR PHILIP.

The goldsmith's son has won me! There are men,
I have heard warriors say, look beautiful
In action. So would he!—How radiantly
The man shone out! We'll change a pass or two.
I'll touch him, that I prove him! 'Tis one thing
To talk about the rapier's point, another
To look upon it, and another yet
To feel it. He shall feel it—not to rue it!
He comes! There is purpose in his looks! His heart
And feet are going the same way! The man
I take him for!—worth winning for a friend!
You have made haste.

Enter THOMAS.

THOMAS.

What haste I could.

SIR PHILIP.

I know it,
And I expected it, and like you for it!
I love an enemy to be in earnest!
You are sure you use the rapier.

THOMAS.

Judge yourself—
I am ready for you!—Come! [*They fight.*

SIR PHILIP.

You are too hot,
And lay yourself too open. Twice just now
I could have run you through!

THOMAS.

Why did not you?

SIR PHILIP.

Aha! Beware, or you will make me hug you!

THOMAS.

Come on.

SIR PHILIP.

Be cooler, then.

THOMAS.

I will.

SIR PHILIP.

That's right!
Most sweetly parried!—Better yet return'd!
That feint was masterly; I balk'd it though—
I have hit you!

THOMAS.

No! Come on!

SIR PHILIP.

I am sure I have!

THOMAS.

Come on!

SIR PHILIP.

You felt me, for I felt my point!

THOMAS.

Come on, I say!

SIR PHILIP.

Since you will have it so!
That longe meant something, but it would not do.
Prepare!—I 'll hit you now again! 'Tis done!

THOMAS.

I fight, not talk!

SIR PHILIP.

I talk whene'er I fight,
As when I eat or drink.

THOMAS.

Come on!

SIR PHILIP.

Again!
I have hit you thrice.

THOMAS.

I feel no wound!

SIR PHILIP.

There's blood!

THOMAS.

A scratch brings blood!

SIR PHILIP.

A deep one, though, it takes
To drain the cheek; and thine is growing pale—
Not, I'll be sworn, with fear! I touch'd you only
Because I meant to sting you, not to kill,
Before I knew you as I know you now.
But knowing you as now I do, I swear
I would not kill you for mine own life's sake,
Which at your will I place!

[*Throws down his sword;* THOMAS *drops his, and tottering towards* SIR PHILIP, *faints in his arms.*

I fear'd 'twas so,
But fear no worse.—He faints, from loss of blood:
A flesh-wound, nothing graver—stanch'd, 'tis heal'd!

Enter MASTER BLOUNT *and* JOHN.

MASTER BLOUNT.

Sir Philip, what's amiss?

SIR PHILIP.

Your son revives;
A passing sickness only, Master Blount;
Stanching removes it quite. Your handkerchief
To keep the compress on I make of mine.
His colour comes again and all is right!
Now hear you, Master Blount. Ne'er left your shop
A jewel rich as is this son of yours.
Commit his fortunes to my hands!—You shall!
I have proved his metal—it has won my heart,
And turn'd me from a foe into a friend;
Yea more, a brother, bound to him as fast
As he partition'd with me the same blood.
Refuse me not!—I will not be gainsaid!
My footman comes—my carriage is at hand.

Enter FOOTMAN.

The gem I lost I will forgive thee for,
And fifty to its back, so grant me this.
Although not born a gentleman, thy son
Was form'd to be one; such I'll make of him!
So farewell desk and counter, Master Blount!
There!—gently—come along with us!—Take care!

[SIR PHILIP *and his footman, supporting* THOMAS, *go out, followed by* MASTER BLOUNT.

JOHN.

The shop is now my own! As we came hither,
My father said he would retire from it,
And leave his trade to me!—and if he does,
Not long his trade and I keep company.
We have been intimates too close—too long—
Familiarity begets contempt!

I hate and scorn my trade. He little knows
What riches burrow in his drawers and chests;
The keys of which I keep, and he forgets!
My plans are laid!—Soon as he quits the town,
I sell off stock and trade, and quit the shop!
Talk of our Thomas!—He a gentleman!
Where is the money? I have taken care
Of that! From interest on his bonds alone
My father will retire in affluence;
The rest is mine, and I'll make use of it
To lay myself out for a high alliance
By marriage!—Trust to me for policy.
If there is one thing I am better in
Than any other thing—'tis policy.

[*Goes out.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Park.

Enter ROBERT, STEPHEN, *and* JACOB.

ROBERT.

He is as rich as Crœsus, sirs, with wit
Enough to keep his purse-strings tight, unless
His own particular occasion prompts
The wish to loosen them! He is at once
Luxurious and a miser.—Some good nature,
More cunning, less discretion. You see through him,
He has a vanity which lays him open
To commonest observers: for example,—
Know him an hour, and he spreads out for you
A banquet of his tastes, his faculties,
His qualities; wherein he most succeeds—
Which is by turns, indeed, in everything—
Not that he would appear to slight his neighbours,
Or wish to pass for anything, beyond
A common, simple, ordinary man!

STEPHEN.

Where made you this redoubtable acquaintance?

ROBERT.

Why, at a race-course, on a holiday,
When fortune made us neighbours. One who knew me
At distance, gave me salutation by

The title which I hold in virtue of
My place near fair Sir Philip! In a moment
I was a friend the richer! Straight he grappled me;
His name, his station, income, residence,
All in a twink were mine—his sole omission
The stock he sprung from, which he would root up—
Yea, sirs, the very father that begot him!
And gave up stock and trade to him—and affluence
Beyond his calculation; the slow piling
Of fifty years and upwards, to himself
Grown out of mind, but not to his successor;
Who having long imprison'd upstart wishes
Beneath the homely apron of his craft,
Now throws this off, no more of use to him,
And shows the others, need no more concealment!
Converts his drawers and shelves to currency,
His currency to lands and messuages,
And o'er the tradesman's counter featly vaulting,
Springs into the saddle of the gentleman!
By strangest chance I learnt his history.

JACOB.

Hopeful acquaintance.

ROBERT.

Say fruition-full!
Well, sir, "I must go home with him; partake
What a plain dresser sends." Ere dinner's done,
I am in his bosom! Now beseeches he
My list of lady spinsters, which I give him,
The features, stature, carriage and complexion,
Wit, temper, parentage and education;
When of my goodness prays he introduction
To one I think would suit him!

STEPHEN.

Which, of course,
You grant him.

ROBERT.

Readily !

STEPHEN.

My life upon it,
The countess!

JACOB.

Charlotte !—Maid to Lady Jane?

ROBERT.

No less.

JACOB.

Had he but known the rogue he dealt with !
A simpleton as safe beside a sharper !

ROBERT.

Yet knowing, modestly, I had my masters
Compared to whom I am a journeyman,
I promised presentation to your lordships—
For you are lords in virtue of your places,
As I, in right of mine, a baronet—
And here appointed him this afternoon
His walk to that intent ! Ah, here he is !
I pray you keep your rank before your eyes
In all you say and do. They only may
Forget their rank who have good title to it,
And by the lapse prove gainers. Mind, you are lords.

JOHN (*entering*).

Good morning to you, fair Sir Philip. Fair
Is fairest worth.—So, sir, I bow to you.

ROBERT.

The noble friends I had the honour, sir,
Of naming to you—this Lord Stephen Hyde,
And this Lord John Fitzwalter.

JOHN.

Dear me, sir,
You overpower me!—May I use the freedom
To shake hands with your lordships?

STEPHEN.

'Tis a boon, sir,
We would entreat of you!

JOHN (*to* ROBERT).

There 's noble breeding!

ROBERT.

Whence come you?

JOHN.

From my after-dinner airing,
In my own phaeton, built to my own order,
After a pattern of my own designing;
The springs my own, the perch, the pole, the colour,
Harness and everything! So please your lordships,
I have a taste, and it shall have its way
While I can pay for it.

STEPHEN.

As right it should, sir.

JOHN.

Then am I fond of driving.

JACOB.

Most men like
The thing that they excel in.

JOHN.

Oh, my lord!—

Your lordship may have seen me hold the reins—
I flatter myself you have!

JACOB.

You may so safely.

JOHN.

I could have sworn you had! If there is one thing
I master 'fore another, it is holding
The reins.

ROBERT.

What did you before breakfast?

JOHN.

Ride—
Your lordships fancy horses?—All men do
Who have good judgment and can back them well.
Mine are all thorough-bred!—my hackney even!—
And broke in for myself.—A horse, my lords,
Should know his master, and him only!—No
Believing what a universe of mischief
Is done by a strange hand! The mouth is spoil'd!—
If not the mouth, the pace; if not the pace,
The temper!—maybe temper, pace, and mouth
Together!—What 's the value of the horse?
And then the seat—no easy thing, my lords!
Of fifty men who vault into the saddle,
Not one may have a seat there! In the manage
Be there one thing wherein I beat another,
'Tis in my seat!

STEPHEN.

Most safely may you say it.

JOHN.

Your lordship, I presume, has seen me ride.
Sir Philip, 'hope you have not got a headache?

ROBERT.

Not I!—have you?

JOHN.

Why something rather like one,
For which I blame the wine of yesterday.

ROBERT.

Nay, sir, the wine was good.

JOHN.

Oh, excellent;
A most sound wine, and of the proper age;
Three years in wood, in bottle thrice that time;
The merchant durst not cheat me, for he knows me.
I ne'er keep wine but of prime quality!
I have a cellar—no one less occasion
To find fault with his wine!—were mine not good,
The money was that bought it!—but no foresight
Is match against mishap!—a bottle may
Be cork'd. 'Twas so with the last bottle! At
The time I had a slight suspicion only,
But now I am positive!

ROBERT.

You are deceived.

JOHN.

Impossible, my dear Sir Philip. If
I am superlative in anything,
Beyond all other things that I excel in,
'Tis in my taste for wine!

ROBERT.

But now to business!
My noble friends approve the match we spoke of,
And promise you their interest, to help
Your wish to its fulfilment!

JOHN.

They o'erpower me!
My lords, I am beholden to you more
Than did I ransack the whole dictionary,
I could find words of value to convey me!
Befits it, though, a private gentleman,
Of modest fortune only, at the best,
Should offer hand to dame of quality?
Talk'd you not, dear Sir Philip, of promotion?

ROBERT.

Oh, yes!—promotion certainly—Lord John,
Where have you the most interest? in church
Or state?

STEPHEN.

Tis difficult to say—let's see!
Upon my word, I think it is a balance!

ROBERT.

And how say you, Lord Stephen?

JACOB.

Like Lord John,
In church and state, my interest is equal.

ROBERT (*to* JOHN).

How leans your predilection?—to the church?

JOHN.

Why, hang it, no! the surplice spoils the figure,
A man and gown sort strangely!—fancy me
In a gown! I might endure it on the Sunday,
But for the week-day gear that 's tack'd to it!
Of formal mode and sombre colour! Dress
All the year round most like an undertaker
In waiting upon funerals!—could I wear
This cap and plume were I a clergyman?

ROBERT *and the rest.*

No, certainly!

JOHN.

The church won't do for me.

ROBERT.

It must be in the state, then! For what office
Would you be ready on emergency,
Say one fell sudden vacant?

JOHN.

Will you believe me,
I cannot tell!

ROBERT.

There is the home department,
And there's the foreign! There's the minister
Of war and of finance!—Diplomacy
Perhaps might suit your genius! Which of these
Would find you most at home, sir?

JOHN.

Do you know,
I'm at a loss to tell!—Indeed I am!
Upon my life I am!—To answer you
Safely for both your credit and my own,
I think 'twere best I say, as likely one
As another.

ROBERT.

Doubtless there is none you fear
To undertake.

JOHN.

None!—Fear? No fear, Sir Philip!
Find me the office, I am sure to find
Abilities to fill it!

ROBERT.

Yet perhaps
There's something you prefer to church or state;
What think you of the army?

JOHN.

Of the army?
It is my taste, my bent, my very instinct!
It must be! why should else a fife and drum
Raise in me such commotion? When I hear them,
The war is all before me!—Infantry,
Cavalry, and artillery, and baggage!
Marchings, encampings, battles, sieges!—Feats
In the field and breach of superhuman daring,
Such perils breasted and o'ercome, as man
Durst never cope before with—look at—think of—
All of my own conceiving!

ROBERT.

Dream you never
Of dying in such straits?

JOHN.

No!—Never!

ROBERT.

Strange!—
I may say wonderful.

JOHN.

You may!—Through bayonets
And swords I rush, as they were stubble—hail
Of cannon balls, shells, musketry, no more
Than wither'd leaves blown round by winds in autumn!

ROBERT.

And are you never wounded?

JOHN.

Wounded?—Yes!
Struck down, but up and on my feet again
Almost in the self-same moment!

ROBERT.

Pain and all
Forgotten.

JOHN.

As a pin had scratch'd me.

ROBERT.

And
Enacting more than ever!

JOHN.

Miracles!

STEPHEN.

He certainly was born to be a soldier.

JOHN.

And such I will be with your leaves, my lords.
What rank?

ROBERT.

Behoves you be an ensign first,
From ensign to lieutenant, thence to captain,
On captain mounts the major, on the major
The colonel.

JOHN.

Takes it long to be the colonel?

ROBERT.

By service long, by interest not at all!

JOHN.

I'll choose the army.

ROBERT.

Yet, my lords, a word:

'Twill never do to court proud lady Blanche
As ensign or lieutenant; nay, as even
Captain or major!—Nothing less, my lord,
Than colonel! Here is a dilemma!

STEPHEN.

A
Dilemma certainly.

JACOB.

A sad dilemma.

JOHN.

My lords!—Sir Philip—what is to be done?

ROBERT.

Stop!—Hold!—I have it!—What is sure to come
One surely may regard as come already!

STEPHEN.

Ay! come as certain as about to come.

ROBERT.

And why not call him colonel then at once?
Your lordship will have no objection?

STEPHEN.

None.

JOHN.

My dear good lord.

ROBERT.

Nor you, my lord.

JACOB.

No more
Than his lordship.

JOHN.

My most excellent good lord!

ROBERT.

Then, Colonel Blount, I give you joy!

JOHN.

My dear
Sir Philip!

STEPHEN *and* JACOB.

Give you joy, fair Colonel Blount.

JOHN.

Dear lords—dear friend—I choke with gratitude.

ROBERT.

There only wants the introduction now,
Which I'll accomplish with your lordship's help.
I know you'll patronise my friend, whilst I
Take charge of Lady Blanche; and as we go,
We'll settle time and place! Come, Colonel; show us
How you can court!

JOHN.

Court, sir?—Did you say, court?
Therein am I especially at home!
May I presume on any excellence
I have, it is on knowing how to court! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the House of LADY ANNE.

Enter CHARLOTTE *and* JANE.

CHARLOTTE.

A fine plot, is it not?

JANE.

But where the profit,
Besides the mirth 'twill bring you?

CHARLOTTE.

Quite enough !

JANE.

You have not seen him yet ?

CHARLOTTE.

That happiness
Lies in perspective. They appoint to-day
The time and place of meeting. If, by chance,
You note me in the street with a strange friend,
Remember I'm the countess—pass me by,
Unless I give you sign I am myself.

JANE.

And Robert plann'd it all ?

CHARLOTTE.

Robert ?—For shame,
Sir Philip, if you please ! If, when together,
We talk of one another, keep in mind
We are our noble selves ! You, Lady Anne !—
I, Lady Blanche !—Robert, Sir Philip Brilliant,
Jacob and Stephen of their masters' styles ;
Lord John Fitzwalter and Lord Stephen Hyde !
And so through all our circle of familiars !
'Tis but with such as do not understand us,
Who know us less than we do one another,
We pass for commoners !—You are new to us !
Sir Philip is the author of the plot.
'Twas not to lose his time he went to college—
No more than others born and bred above him—
And spent three years there ! You will travel ere
You find his match in mischief.

JANE (*listening*).

Did you hear
My lady's voice?

CHARLOTTE.

I heard that person speak.

JANE.

That person?

CHARLOTTE.

Lady Anne, 'long as you live,
Never let down yourself!—You'll find too many
Ready to do that kindness for you.

JANE (*listening*).

There
Is Lady Blanche.

CHARLOTTE.

I think it is that person.
Don't look surprised—although we owe her some
Consideration, as our foster sister,
Who shared with us our mother's nurture—nay,
Participates with us almost one nature,
Making a jest of love and sport of lovers;
While she you deign to serve escheweth both!
We trust your ladyship will be at home
To-morrow when we call.

JANE.

Yes, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE.

Charlotte! Forgive me, Lady Anne—your ladyship
Forgets yourself! 'Tis Lady Blanche departs
And bids good morning to your ladyship!

[*They go out severally.*

SCENE III.

Another Room.

Enter LADY BLANCHE *and* LADY ANNE.

LADY BLANCHE.

Man!—man!—the paragon!—the fool he is
When women know themselves and know to treat him;
The knave when left to his own practices!
Is there a husband you can name, who bears
His course of wooing out?—who does not prove it
A trade of common snaring?—who resembles
The man he was before the honey-moon?
A woman's life, my friend, from girlhood onwards
Has melancholy progress! She begins
A goddess; then declines into a bride—
Which means a young wife keeping holiday,
As children sent to school go not at once
To tasks—next sinks into a housekeeper—
Her wedding ring her badge of office!—thence
Haply into a nurse!—When matters not
How soon she settles into grandmama,
To tell her offspring of her second stock
The story of her cozening!

LADY ANNE.

How I love you
When thus you talk! Would all our sex were like you!
And, yet, you suffer men, while I repel them!

LADY BLANCHE.

I suffer them to plague them, and I do so.

You are an old maid by anticipation,
And make the arch dissemblers stand aloof.
Oh, how I dote upon a staunch old maid!—
I'll die one!—She stands up for liberty;
Talk of the rights of men! The rights that want
Upholding are the rights of women!—Men
Are tyrants! have too many rights! We know it!
Ours are the rights want champions! We should be lost
Without old maids—Oh, the delicious crabs!
The faces men make at them when they find them
Their masters!

LADY ANNE.

Women have more soul than men.

LADY BLANCHE.

Men have no soul at all compared to women;
Look at Queen Bess! The man she made of England—
A man to cuff all comers! She was in fault
In one thing, though.

LADY ANNE.

And prithee what was that?

LADY BLANCHE.

She did not call her own sex to her councils!
Which had she done, women had proved themselves
The things they could be, would men give them leave!
Cecil and Burleigh!—Bacon!—What were they
But what a woman made them? Men, indeed!
There was a sample of man's proper place,
When Essex got his ears box'd!—Do you feel
Your fingers tingle? Mine do!—Yet was she
In love with Essex!

LADY ANNE.

Were you ne'er in love?

LADY BLANCHE.

Are you in madness! Wherefore do you ask?

LADY ANNE.

Because of late whene'er you talk of love
You sigh! I have had strange thoughts about you, Blanche.
They call you a coquette, and so you are;
Yet something tells me, once upon a time
You felt a touch of love. Do you remember
A certain fair Whit Monday? Ah, you blush!

LADY BLANCHE.

Because you tax me!—Blush!—That fair Whit Monday
We went a-shopping; and, for an adventure,
Disguised ourselves as simple yeomen's daughters.
What's there to blush at?

LADY ANNE.

Nothing, if no more—
If nothing follow'd—if that fair Whit Monday
You did not make a conquest of a youth
Who waited on us.

LADY BLANCHE.

Was it at the draper's?

LADY ANNE.

No, Blanche. No youth was in the draper's shop!

LADY BLANCHE.

The mercer's, then.

LADY ANNE.

Nor was it at the mercer's,
Nor yet the cordwainer's—where had it been,
How had the blushing youth contrived to take
The span of your maidship's instep, all the while
His eyes upon your face—whence, as I live,
He never moved them till we left the shop,

Except to find the articles we ask'd for!—
A youth misused of fate to set him, where
Behoved his betters rather wait than he!
A lofty forehead, like a marble dome
For princely thoughts to dwell in! eyes to court
Challenge of war or love, showing themselves
Frankly and boldly at their posts—a nose
Of the fine Grecian with a touch of Rome,
Elegance crown'd with strength; a mouth composed
Of lips were fashion'd after Cupid's bow,
And, like it, made to send his arrow home,
Wing'd with their dulcet twang! Ambitious chin,
Dimpled and knobb'd like pattern Antinous!
There is his face, which well his neck and bust
Deserved; as for the rest of him, you know
The counter hid him from us.

LADY BLANCHÉ.

Counter-like,
In calculation of the drawback, doubtless,
His head and bust had suffer'd through the fault
Of his mis-shapen legs. I should not wonder
Had he clubb'd feet.

LADY ANNE.

Have you not seen his feet?
Come! Did you never on adventure go
A-shopping there again?

LADY BLANCHE.

Well, Anne, I did!
Again, and yet again.—Nay, do not laugh,
'Twas only to enjoy the goldsmith's blush!

LADY ANNE.

There, Blanche! Just now you could not find the shop!

LADY BLANCHE.

Well! things will jump into one's memory
When least we look for them. Why do you laugh?
Don't laugh, dear Anne, and I will tell you more!
I took the goldsmith to my milliner's
One day when he perforce would see me home:
A yeoman's daughter could not well, you know,
O'errule a goldsmith's son. Well, at the door
In vain I dropp'd him court'sy after court'sy,
In linsey-woolsey mode! He would not go.
"He must have speech with me a minute!"—"Nay!"
"Indeed, he must,"—then said I, "Nay," again.
"He must in pity,"—Still did I say, "Nay."
But what's the use of "nay," said fifty times,
If "yes" at last will come?—and come it did:
"He might have speech a minute!" What's a minute?
A portion of an hour! A portion gone,
The hour is broken!—What's the value of
A broken thing?—as well he have the hour!
The hour he had! The goldsmith's son was smitten;
Love at first sight!—The arrow in the core!
Whereat the maid amused—it may be, pleased;
Touch'd, will you have it so.—Well, she was touch'd!—
Did after grant the goldsmith divers meetings,
Listening in silence to his rhapsodies
In rustic cloak, with hood drawn o'er her head,
Her face but half revealing! Till, at length,
Feeling a something—nothing like a passion!—
Perhaps an interest—yes; like that one watches
The progress of a pleasant story with,
But which indulging is but waste of time;
Having a horror, too, of slavery—

No matter how far out of reach of it;
And then, besides, admonish'd by my rank;
At last I took the resolution
To drop the masquerade—although, I own,
With some compunction.

LADY ANNE.

He deserved some.

LADY BLANCHE.

He!
Why, was he not a man!—He proved he was!
Made out his right and title.—Took his leave
Without good-bye, by word or yet by missive;
Since when I ne'er have met him. 'Twas as well,
Although it mortified me!—Nothing more.

LADY ANNE.

Who, think you, is come home? Sir Philip Brilliant.
When we have time, I'll let you hear a tale
Of him that does him honour. His adventure
Was likewise with a goldsmith's son.

LADY BLANCHE.

Perhaps
The same.—What was it?—Come, the heads of it!

LADY ANNE.

They chanced to quarrel; fought. His adversary,
Though wounded, would not own it, till almost
He dropp'd with loss of blood—whereat Sir Philip,
Amazed and captivated, grew his friend;
Took him abroad with him, and step by step
Has raised to his own rank. He comes with him,
This very evening, to pay visit to me,
And introduce the gentleman.

LADY BLANCHE.

His name?

LADY ANNE.

I never thought to ask it!

LADY BLANCHE.

Should it be!
You and Sir Philip are good friends, it seems.
On me he has not call'd!

LADY ANNE.

He is your slave.
You have him at your foot whene'er you please;
I own it has amazed me that a man,
So slight to contemplate, should have achieved
An act of generous manhood so robust
In healthy comeliness.

JANE (*entering*).

Sir Philip Brilliant.

Enter SIR PHILIP BRILLIANT *and* THOMAS, *as* COLONEL BLOUNT.

LADY ANNE.

Welcome, Sir Philip.

SIR PHILIP.

Colonel Blount, my friend.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

The goldsmith's son.

SIR PHILIP.

Fair Lady Anne, I kiss
Your hand, and for my friend here, Colonel Blount,
Claim your acquaintance.

LADY ANNE (*to Lady Blanche*).

'Tis the goldsmith's son!
He does not know you!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

How should he—he never

Beheld my face except beneath my hood,
How can he in the Countess find a trace
O' the simple yeoman's maid?—You'll pardon me,
I must go home! Good evening!—Go you to
The rout to-night, Sir Philip?

SIR PHILIP.

Yes.

LADY BLANCHE.

We 'll meet;
And I can answer for our host, he'll thank you
To bring your friend.—Farewell.—Good morning, sir.

[*Goes out.*

LADY ANNE (*aside*).

She seems disturb'd.

SIR PHILIP.

Fair Lady Anne, permit
My friend to write a line that asks despatch,—
Forgot on leaving home!

LADY ANNE.

The library!
Pray you step in and freely help yourself.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I thank you, lady!—How resemblances,
The most remote, recal familiar things,
As in a ray of light one sees the sun!
Less than the ray unto the sun is she
That's gone, to her whose image she recall'd,
And set before my mind as palpably,
As though the paragon stood there before me!

[*Goes out.*

SIR PHILIP.

Dear Lady Anne, in your kind welcome back
I gladly miss'd your wonted scorn of me.

LADY ANNE.

Gladly !—why name it then to bring it back ?
See what you 've done ! What shall I call thee now ?
Ware from the milliner's, the tailor's, or
The cordwainer's, or jeweller's, or what ?
Thyself is the least part of thee ! The man
Is trimmings to the dress.—Thou art a ruff
Of plaits elaborate and infinite ;
Thy vest for curiosity of style,
Armour of diamonds upon velvet plaited,
Were better given a cabinet to keep
As theme for wonderment to after time,
Than left provision for the hungry air
That's sure to eat it up ! Thy jerkin runs
Enormous risk from thy ambition ! trying
With satin slashes, ribbon-knots, and lace,
How close to woman's gear a man's may come,
And still appear a man's—thy trunks partake
Its divers sins ; and for thy hose, who says,
In town or out of town, thou walk'st not in
A shrubbery, why let him own he is blind,
To save his credit for veracity !
Thy very rapier would abjure the man !
Its handle vouches for the laceman more
Than the cutler—nay, nor him beside alone ;
'Twas plann'd in concert with a milliner !
Which of the precious metals has the honour
To help it to a blade ? It cannot be
A thing so exquisitely delicate
Could pair with homely steel ?

SIR PHILIP.

Give over !

LADY ANNE.

I will.

SIR PHILIP.

I want a friend, dear Lady Anne.

LADY ANNE.

A friend?
And come you to a woman for a friend?
Better you seek a man.

SIR PHILIP.

He cannot help me,
A woman can; she knows a woman's mind,
And how 'tis hit; which being done, they say,
Her heart 's in jeopardy!

LADY ANNE.

Who say so? They
Who do not know her! Hit her heart, you are sure
Of her mind.

SIR PHILIP.

No easy thing to do! For, now,
Three years and upwards have I tried to hit
The heart of Lady Blanche!

LADY ANNE.

I know you have.

SIR PHILIP.

Three years are past, yet am I now as wide
As ever of the mark.

LADY ANNE.

Had you guess'd that
At setting out, what labour had you spared,
Or spent perhaps to more account, employ'd
On some one else! Sir Philip!

SIR PHILIP.

Lady Anne?

LADY ANNE.

For three years have you been my fair acquaintance;
And if I err not, all that lapse of time
You have enjoy'd good health!

SIR PHILIP.

Nay; no man better!

LADY ANNE.

Yor appetite has never fail'd you?

SIR PHILIP.

Never!

LADY ANNE.

So I should think!—You have always slept o' nights?

SIR PHILIP.

From laying down my head to lifting it!

LADY ANNE.

Sound sleep?—No trouble in the shape of dreams?

SIR PHILIP.

None that I recollect.

LADY ANNE.

And yet in love!
And not successfully!—'Tis very strange!

SIR PHILIP.

'Tis very strange.

LADY ANNE.

Come, tell me how you feel
Towards Lady Blanche? What are the signs whereby
You know you love her, when you think of her?
Do you sigh very deeply?

SIR PHILIP.

I'm not sure
That I do sigh at all—but I'm in love.

LADY ANNE.

You cannot be in love, unless you sigh.

SIR PHILIP.

A man may sigh, without his knowing it.

LADY ANNE.

That's true. How feel you when another man
Detains her ear aloof?

SIR PHILIP.

How feel I then?
How should I feel?

LADY ANNE.

Do you not purse your brows?

SIR PHILIP.

No!

LADY ANNE.

No!—Do you not bite your lip?

SIR PHILIP.

No!

LADY ANNE.

No?
Nor clench your hand?

SIR PHILIP.

Nor clench my hand!—Why should I?

LADY ANNE.

Could you not knock him down?

SIR PHILIP.

I'd like to know
For what?

LADY ANNE.

You would like to know for what? You are deep,

You are very deep in love. What would you do
With Lady Blanche, suppose you married her?

SIR PHILIP.

Show her to court and town—go everywhere,
And take her with me, that the world might see
She that rejected scores of suits was mine.

LADY ANNE.

It is his vanity that loves, not he! (*aside*)
No enterprise of danger then it seems
I help you in instructing you the way
To win the heart of lovely Lady Blanche!

SIR PHILIP.

None.

LADY ANNE.

Should we fail, you are a sound man still;
There is no fear of dying, falling sick,
Of loss of appetite, or sleep, or aught
Pernicious to your comfort?

SIR PHILIP.

Not the least!

LADY ANNE.

If you should fail, you fail; if win, you win!
Indifferent which!

SIR PHILIP.

Nay, I would rather win.

LADY ANNE.

You ought, that covet it so heartily.

SIR PHILIP.

Now, then, my lesson! What am I to do?

LADY ANNE.

'Tis plain she likes you not, the man you are.

SIR PHILIP.

Tis very plain.

LADY ANNE.

Then be another man.
This outlay of attire—this garniture
Of trimmings and of trinkets—looks not well
In certain women's eyes. It comes too near
Themselves.

SIR PHILIP.

It does so!

LADY ANNE.

Change this gear at once.
Dress well, but let it be like other men,
Nothing particular—as if you'd say
"Look at me, ladies; how do you like me?" What
A question for a man! and do not speak
Between a simper and a lisp; it shames
A mouth with a beard; and don't tread mincingly:
'Tis bad enough in a woman,—what, then, in
A man! And in the act of courtesy
Give not your body such a sway, as though
It were a miracle the trunk and limbs
Did hold together; but in all your acts
Be simple and at home. You may gain much
And will lose nothing by it. Do you read?

SIR PHILIP.

Occasionally, yes—by fits and starts.

LADY ANNE.

Latin and Greek?

SIR PHILIP.

I have half forgotten them.

LADY ANNE.

Would you renew your memory there with me,
You are welcome. Call and let us read together.

SIR PHILIP.

Dear Lady Anne, how good you are! We are friends?

LADY ANNE.

We are!

SIR PHILIP.

Then let me seal it on your hand.
I am almost loath to go!

LADY ANNE.

Almost, no stop!
Keep ever to almost, you are safe enough.

SIR PHILIP.

I'll see what keeps my friend!

LADY ANNE.

I'll follow you!

SIR PHILIP.

Yet, ere I go, I'll kiss your hand once more!

[*Goes out.*

LADY ANNE.

That man has got a heart and does not know it.
Nought of himself, save what his mirror shows him,
He sees. His eyes are shut to what he is,
Therein, where lie his nobler properties;
I'll open them and make a man of him!
Anne! what art thou about? Eschewest thou
His sex and hold'st companionship with him?
In charity!—nothing more! It would be strange
If, teaching him to woo fair Lady Blanche,
I chanced to cause him turn his eyes on me!
At the bare thought how takes my heart alarm!

Well! can I help it, comes it to that pass?
It is his own affair! and touching Blanche,
No heartscald 'tis to her! She loves him not.
My life upon it not without some cost,
Did Blanche return to sun her eyes again
I' th' blushing cheek of the young jeweller!
I wonder was it fancy, but I thought
Sir Philip blush'd on taking leave of me.
Those blushes are strange things! Upon my life,
One cannot think of them, but one feels strangely!
Well for him he's in love with Lady Blanche,
If bad his chance with her 'twere worse with me!
And yet I doubt if love for her he feels.
Love her three years, and never once fall sick,
Lack appetite, lose sleep—sound sleep! no dreams
To trouble it!—no hurricane of sighs.
Allow another lay close siege to her
And never purse his brow, nor bite his lip,
Nor clench his hand as he could knock him down;
He cannot be in love with Lady Blanche!

[*Goes out.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Park.

Enter ROBERT *and* CHARLOTTE.

ROBERT.

THIS is the place!—'Tis now almost the hour!
Now—Lady Blanche!—forget the lady's maid,
And be the Countess. Bear yourself with height;
Incline your head in lieu of curtseying;
And that not over-much!—Be affluent
In airs!—As many graces as you can!
Do not forget your friends, Lords John and Stephen;
Let nothing trace them to the servants' room
That falls from thee! And pray you keep in mind
My baronetcy!—but through all your pride
Let admiration of this coxcomb shine,
As it behoves you to be smit with him!
They come.—Now prove yourself an actress.—Mark;
We'll pass them first, then turn.—They know their cue.

Enter STEPHEN, JOHN, JACOB.

STEPHEN *and* JACOB (*as they cross*).

Good day!

ROBERT *and* CHARLOTTE (*very stately; crossing and going out*).

Good day!

JOHN (*stopping the others*).

Is that the Countess?

STEPHEN.

Don't
Look back! 'Tis not the mode. We'll turn anon,
The odds are ten to one they do the same.

[*They go out, then return;* ROBERT *and* CHARLOTTE *returning at the same time—both parties come to a stand.*

STEPHEN.

Good day again, Sir Philip.

ROBERT.

Dear Lord John,
It is, indeed, a fair and sunny day!
Lord Stephen, how are you?—Your servant, sir!

JOHN.

Mean you not to present me?

STEPHEN.

Stay awhile!

CHARLOTTE (*half aloud to* ROBERT).

A monstrous handsome person that, Sir Philip.

JOHN.

She speaks, methinks, of me!

STEPHEN *and* JACOB.

Be sure she does.

JOHN.

She is struck! Pray introduce me.—Nothing like
Clenching the nail at once!

STEPHEN.

My friend aspires
To know you, Lady Blanche!

CHARLOTTE.

His grace is good.

JOHN.

She takes me for a duke !—Your ladyship
O'errates, alas, my rank ! I am not a duke.

CHARLOTTE.

Alas,
Not for your lordship, but the rank which lacks
The pride of owning such an ornament.

JOHN.

She'll have me an earl, if I am not a duke.
I can't account for this !

STEPHEN.

'Tis instinct, sir !
Like natures oft find one another out !
Though yet plain gentleman, I would not say
But you're an earl or duke in embryo !

JOHN.

I have my own forebodings thereupon ;
'Twere fit I undeceived her,—were it not ?
Fair lady ! neither duke nor earl am I.

CHARLOTTE.

I must believe your looks against your words !

JOHN.

Nay, lady, trust my words against my looks !

ROBERT.

Fair Lady Blanche, 'tis even as he says ;
Afflict him not with incredulity,
For he is honest, even as well favour'd !
That noble presence—for it is, indeed,
No less than noble, as the evidence
Of feature, form, and bearing do attest—
Belongs to neither duke nor earl, but calls
A commoner its owner !

CHARLOTTE.

Do you say so?
Nor duke nor earl!—Is he a baronet?

ROBERT.

Not yet a baronet.

JOHN.

How very strong
The feeling of my quality is upon her!

CHARLOTTE.

Who is your friend, and what?

ROBERT.

Lord John, how strangely
You introduced the gentleman! I vow
You never named him; so the ceremony
Must be perform'd again! Fair Lady Blanche,
Permit me to solicit your acquaintance
For Colonel Blount.

CHARLOTTE.

For Colonel Blount!—Oh, no!

ROBERT.

Indeed! indeed!

CHARLOTTE.

I can't believe it.

ROBERT.

True
As I'm a baronet.

STEPHEN.

Or I, a lord.

JACOB.

Or I, another, or as your ladyship
Is Lady Blanche.

CHARLOTTE.

Deny me Lady Blanche,
Deny that you are lords; Sir Philip, you
That you're a baronet; but tell me not
That gentleman is a colonel!—Colonel?—Fie!
Not he!

JOHN.

Does she suspect me, do you think?
I have my fears!

ROBERT.

And so have I!

JOHN.

Indeed!
Were it not better then I stole away?

CHARLOTTE.

A colonel! Fie, Sir Philip—fie, Lord John,
Lord Stephen! Play on my credulity!
Palm your friend on me for a colonel!

JOHN.

Clear
She penetrates the truth—I will be gone;
Don't stop me, dear Sir Philip.

CHARLOTTE.

Colonel—Sir,
Are you a colonel?

JOHN (*aside to* ROBERT).

What am I to say?

ROBERT.

Put a bold face upon it!—Say at once
You would not contradict her!

JOHN (*stammering*).

'Twere offence

To say I am the thing your ladyship
Asserts me not to be!

CHARLOTTE.

I knew 'twas so!
I knew he was no colonel!

JOHN.

I'm undone.

CHARLOTTE.

A colonel! does he look like one?—Why, friends,
You cannot use your eyes! Your friend must be
A general!

JOHN.

Give me joy! I breathe again,
Like one half drown'd that's to the surface brought!
I thank your ladyship for giving me
So high a rank! I am a general
In prospect!

ROBERT.

Now you'll do. Propose to walk,
And offer her your arm.

JOHN.

Let me take time,
Scarce yet can I fetch breath.

ROBERT.

Love's time is now!
It brooks not putting off! Love's time is when
It sees 'tis welcome. So you seem to be,
And make your most of it. Surprise will take
The fort would mock a siege! Declare yourself,
And straight propose. You know the chance faint heart
Runs with fair lady!

JOHN.

Yes.

ROBERT.

Then profit by
The adage. Sure you lack not courage.

JOHN.

Courage?
And with a woman!—Be there anything
Wherein I have the mastery beyond
All other things, 'tis courage with a woman!
Your ladyship.

CHARLOTTE (*very stately*).

Sir!

[JOHN *is thrown off his guard.*

STEPHEN.

What is she about?

ROBERT.

Let her alone. She better knows than you.
Without a little frost, a summer comes
With half a welcome.

CHARLOTTE.

Sir? What would you say?
I think, or I'm deceived, you spoke just now.
Well, sir?

JOHN (*at a loss*).

The day is marvellously fine.

CHARLOTTE.

'Tis June, sir.

JOHN.

June! So is it! Then the day
May well be fine without a miracle.

CHARLOTTE.

And yet for June the day is fine.

JOHN.

'Twas that
I meant to say.

CHARLOTTE.

A breezy day!

JOHN.

It is
A breezy day.

CHARLOTTE.

Though warm.

JOHN.

Though warm.

CHARLOTTE.

A day,
Methinks, to walk. Do you like walking, sir?

[*Putting her arm through his.*

JOHN.

Much, very much. It is a passion with me!
I love to walk—luxuriate in a walk!
And I walk well. So, please your ladyship,
If there's one thing wherein I most excel,
'Tis walking.

CHARLOTTE.

I should like to learn of you.

JOHN.

When? I am ready any time.

CHARLOTTE.

Why, now;
Since I have placed my arm—I trust with leave—
In yours.

JOHN.

Now be it then. How proud I am

To wait upon your ladyship. I live
Only to please your sex.

CHARLOTTE.

You flatter us.

JOHN.

Nay, Lady Blanche, 'tis simple honesty—
Mere honesty. If there's a quality
Whereon, above all others, I presume—

CHARLOTTE.

You need not tell me, Colonel Blount—I know—
Am sure—could swear it. It is honesty. [*They go out.*

SCENE II.

The Antechamber to a Ball-Room.—Enter LADY BLANCHE.

LADY BLANCHE.

He knows me not at all!—His memory,
Far as concerns me, is a perfect blank,
And in his heart not e'en a spark remains,
To mind me of the love he bore me when
I seem'd a yeoman's maid. She is forgot,
But I 'll avenge her! and enslave his heart
Before he knows his danger. Twice or thrice
We spoke in passing. In his eye I saw
No witness to the charms which all allow!—
But soon shall he attest them to his cost.
He comes!—I 'll hold him now in spite of him;
Find out his vulnerable part—all men
That have free hearts are somewhere vulnerable!—
Propitiate his vanity, his pride,
Humour—whate'er sways uppermost; and then
Right to his heart, and win the citadel

Which, mine, who lists may keep. — He comes! — In thought!
[*Enter* COLONEL BLOUNT.
Well, Colonel Blount, I saw you dance just now.
Come, sir, sit down, and tell me how you liked
Your partner, sir—a special friend of mine!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

A lady worthy praise.

LADY BLANCHE.

Did you admire
Her diamonds?—Mine are paragons to them! [*Aside.*
They are very rich!—Perhaps you do not care
For gems?—No more do I!—But what of that?
The world does! What are you and I against
The world?—I know what you would say! Oneself
May be one's world, or one may light upon
Another self outweighs the world! That self
When I shall find, farewell the world for me!
The diamonds I could prize were shining thoughts,
Mined in the heart of one that I could love!
(*Aside.*) A shaft shot straight and should go home.—He's struck!
If struck, he should be stung! The deer is charm'd!
The skill I try on him, I throw away!
I'll give it over! At the first shot? No,
The quiver yet is full. What ponders he?
(*Aloud.*) Where are your thoughts, sir?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Lady, close at hand,
Whene'er you call them to attend upon you.

LADY BLANCHE.

Attendance willing waits not to be call'd,
But still forestals the summons, still attends!

Not that I claim such servitude from one
That's but my new acquaintance! By and by
Perhaps I may be more observed—and more
May wish to be so. There are scores of men
Who watch my looks to worm my wishes from them,
And do them ere they are told! But what are scores
That don't include the unit which we want?
Found I that unit, farewell scores of scores—
Nay, farewell millions! It were more to me!
I think the day will come—nay, I believe
'Tis nearer than I thought it yesterday,
When first I made your fair acquaintance, sir!
(*Aside.*) The man 's a stock! He cannot hear! I 'll try
If he can see! (*Aloud.*) Where are your thoughts again?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Here, madam, your retainers.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

Such retainers
Might wait upon my grandmother for me!
(*Aloud.*) The lady's forehead you were dancing with,
They say, a strong resemblance bears to mine.
Does it? 'Tis not so high by half an inch (*aside*).
Well, sir?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I am thinking, madam.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

Thinking, when
He should be looking! Where are the man's eyes?
Poring upon his feet—and mine beside them!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I own I cannot see the likeness.

LADY BLANCHE (*aloud*).

I
Should wonder if you did! (*Aloud.*) I do not think
Our foreheads much alike—mine, I believe,
Somewhat exceeds in height! Do you think it does?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I think it does a little.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

Half an inch
A little in a forehead! Pshaw! He knows not
What he is saying! (*Aloud.*) Sir, are you listening to me?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

With all my ears!

LADY BLANCHE.

Then all, I fear, all lack!
(*Aside.*) I will transfix him with my arms! They say
That that same lady has surpassing arms!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

She wears surpassing bracelets!

LADY BLANCHE.

Like you not
A lady should wear bracelets?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I like nothing
Would supersede the handiwork of Nature!
Why mask the graceful wrist? Stopp'd Nature there,
Instead of going on consummately
To the fair finish, what would you have said?
Art is a gracious handmaid to work on,
Where her high mistress, Nature, fails; but thence
Is a poor critic who but shames himself
Improving what's complete!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

He is roused at last!
I have found his vein. He shall not nod again.
(*Aloud.*) My bracelets hurt.—The clasps are very stiff.
I pray you help me take them off! I 'll never
Wear them again.—Now, sir, your eyes are mine.

COLONEL BLOUNT (*holding her hand, and contemplating the bracelet*).

'Tis wonderful!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

He perches and is limed—my saucy linnet!
How light you made just now of the poor bush,
A spray of which has caught you!

COLONEL BLOUNT (*still holding, &c.*).

Art, beat that!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

She can't!

COLONEL BLOUNT (*still holding her hand*).

Or find the thing that will comprise
Such richness in ten thousand times the space!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

He has found out at last I have an arm,
We 'll live in hopes he will find out anon
I have a face as well!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Why, caracks thus
Might weigh almost 'gainst kingdoms.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

Caracks!—What
Have arms to do with caracks?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Multiply
The grains of each of these a thousand fold,
And let the bulk grow with them, you will have
The income of an empire in the space
That spans this little wrist!

LADY BLANCHE.

Mean you my diamonds?
Sir, you were 'prentice to a lapidary!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I know I was.

LADY BLANCHE.

Then, having left your craft,
You should forget it.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

'Twas an honest one;
And, though I loved it not, I blush not for it!

LADY BLANCHE.

What kind of man is this?—I am forgetful! (*Aside.*)
I have been ungenerous and ask your pardon!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Pardon!—O no!—impossible!—a lady
Must never ask for pardon!

LADY BLANCHE.

You forgive me?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I will when you offend me!

LADY BLANCHE.

Then we are friends.

COLONEL BLOUNT

Then I am happy!

LADY BLANCHE.

You are a soldier, sir.
Tell me of your exploits. I love brave men,
And hear their deeds with pleasure.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Had I deeds
To speak of, I had rather others told them.

LADY BLANCHE.

Come, sir, what is a battle?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Glory, madam,
In a just cause, but at the best bought dearly
When men destroy their brother men, like them
Framed in the image of their common Maker!

LADY BLANCHE.

You would fight again?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I would, to serve my country;
But should be glad she needed not such service.
We must have wars, if others will provoke us,
And ever then, I trust, act gallantly,
As men that loathe aggression!—but, I hope,
That golden age will come—'tis promised us,
When men will fear their God and live like men,
To brutes resigning carnage.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

He o'ertowers me
In all he thinks and feels!—I grow to fear him!
He has his weaknesses!—who is without them?
I'll find them out!—he is nothing but a man!
Soldiers live merrily, they say, in quarters—
Aloud.) You don't refuse your glass!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Nor yet abuse it;
Unless, perhaps, a joyous time or two
When men make holiday, and open hearts
Would shut at my defection—yet e'en then,
Keep somewhat within compass!—Do believe me,
And for my credit press me not too closely.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

How honest is he! if I prove him further,
I almost fear to find myself a knave!
Yet I 'll go on! (*Aloud.*)—Soldiers, I have heard, love play.
You play?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

At times; and then for the suspense
That chance creates—that mistress none can fix,
Who from the sharper's clasp escapes as well
As his who woos her with fair gallantry!
I never gamble.

LADY BLANCHE.

How can you refrain?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

With thought of what a paltry act it is!
To say the least, it never can consist
With proper manhood to enjoy the thing
Was not one's own an hour ago, and accord
Not his own merit now has won him! then,
To wax rich by another's poverty!
My pillow for the sleep it giveth me
To rob another man's!—How could I lay
My head upon it?—when I feast, the bread
That loads my board, to leave another's bare,
Ay of a crust perhaps!—How could I touch it?
To go abroad and show the witness sun

My fullness, at such destitution bought
As robs that sun of light and heat to one
Who yesterday rejoiced in them and bless'd them !
Can he who games have feeling ?—yes, he may !—
But better in my mind he had it not !
For I esteem him preferable far,
In rate of manhood, that has not a heart
Than he that has, and makes vile use of it !
The one is traitor unto nature, which
The other can't be called !—Were it my lot
In some unguarded moment of caprice,
Forgetfulness, or aught that renders one
Unlike oneself—were it, in such a lapse,
My lot to win a fortune—ere I slept
I must disgorge my gains, that the next day
I might awake a man !

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

He is a man !
Where am I ?—What am I about ? I fear
I have found a master where I sought a slave.
Heigho !—methinks I could look up to him,
Give him obedience, would he in exchange
Give me his heart !—But is it his to give ?
I'll try, yet fear to try !—(*Aloud.*) Soldiers are lovers ?
Some men are women-haters—are you one ?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I honour women.

LADY BLANCHE.

But I spoke of loving !
Say all men love; yet, love not all alike.
Some men love lightly, others seriously,
Some last, some change—which way of these love you ?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Indeed, you puzzle me!

LADY BLANCHE.

You are afraid
To answer!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

No!—If you will take my answer—
I love for ever—if I love at all!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

I see!—He never loved the yeoman's maid.
(*Aloud.*) What call you loving?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Blissful cherishing!
Of our own happiness that makes a casket
Wherein to keep a treasured other's safe!
He who loves lightly does not love at all,
He only thinks he loves!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

So loved he when
He loved the yeoman's maid!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

There is more of Heaven
In that sweet mood than such a man e'er dream'd of!
Love lightly!—Love is nothing, if its root
Pierces the surface only of the heart!
It must dive to the core, then what will pluck it out
With fibres so embedded! It may happen
The object is forgetful; but what then,
If 'tis found out too late?—The soil hath given
Its richest spirits to the growth.—'Tis spent!—
I don't believe that heart can love again!
I am sure it cannot!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

He will steal my heart
Before my face, and all against my will,
Nor give me hold of his.—I must break off
This converse! (*Aloud.*) Sir, I thank you for the time
You have wasted on me! We have talk'd of trifles,
But pleasantly—nay, very pleasantly!
You are going? A good night—a kind good night.
I am glad of your acquaintance—will shake hands
If you please! I have tired you, have I not?—Don't answer;
I know you must deny.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I do so frankly.

LADY BLANCHE.

I thank you frankly then, and so good night.

[COLONEL BLOUNT *goes out.*

How changed I feel!—I do not know myself!
Changed!—He shall change. I'll bring him to his knee!
I wonder what he thinks of me?—I'll plan
A snare for him shall show me.—He did not kiss
My hand!—and, when I gave it him, almost
I held it to his lips!—One thing is certain,
The yeoman's maid is free to love for him!
How I deceived myself, to think one moment
The man was any other than a man!
How very soon I have disabused myself!
To-morrow shall unfold!—not kiss my hand!
I could have sworn he would have kiss'd my hand!

[*Goes out.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The House of LADY ANNE.—*A Room.*

Enter LADY ANNE.

LADY ANNE.

HE thrives beyond my hopes! Leave an old maid
Alone to make a man, reforming him
After the fashion likes her. Women prate
Who talk of conquest, while they stoop to love!
What's sway for sway, but mere equality
Wherein the party least deserves to rule—
And that, past all dispute, is man, the lord!—
Ne'er rests till he disturbs the perfect poise,
Into his own scale throws his might—that good
Wherein the brute hath mastery o'er him—
And to the beam heaves up the counter one,
To hang there at his will!—Had women but
The thews of men! My very girlhood solved
The riddle of their sovereignty!—Brought up
With two male cubs of cousins, was not I
A likely one the relative deserts
Of women and of men to put to proof?
And didn't I?—I beat them to a stand!
We started all together! Where were they
When I could read?—Why, in the spelling-book!
When I was in subtraction, where were they?

A cudgelling their brains to cast a sum
Of ten lines in addition! I could rhyme
My tables backwards, while they fought with pounds,
Shillings and pence, that kept the upper hand
And laugh'd at them for masters! I could parse,
While they on footing of most shy acquaintance
Kept with their parts of speech! In one thing only
I found I met my betters—and e'en there
I tried them, though I came off second best—
I could not beat them when they quarrell'd with me!
Because they held my hands!—They were afraid
To fight me!—But Sir Philip thrives apace,
And all of my performing!—And what pains
He takes to please me, with his air, his gait,
His dress, and most of all his books! How fond
He is of study! I'll do all I can
To encourage him!—At last, he'll make a man!

Enter JANE.

Well, Jane.

JANE.

One asks to see your ladyship,
Whose forward manners call his years most backward.
He looks but twenty, may you trust his chin,
But should be thirty and no minute wasted.
He told his will, nor gave me time to answer,
But, making of his arms a pillory,
Began to kiss me, madam! Smack on smack,
Quick as the clapper of the 'larum bell
That ne'er gives o'er before the weight is down,
Like him who still held on till out of breath!

LADY ANNE.

Hadst not a tongue, girl, to let loose upon him?

JANE.

I had, my lady; but my lips were stopp'd.

LADY ANNE.

But when your lips were free!

JANE.

The harm was done!

LADY ANNE.

I will not see him!

JANE.

He is at the door!

LADY ANNE.

Shut it! Go ring the bell!

LADY BLANCHE (*entering disguised as a man*).

And if she does,
I'll ring the changes on her lips again.

LADY ANNE.

Go call my footman!

LADY BLANCHE.

If she bears them spite,—
For I shall trounce them soundly, if they come;
I'll ring the bell; but mark the consequence,
Footmen or maids, I'll kiss you spite of them,
Before their faces! Be they maids that come,
I'll kiss the maids as well.—You see my mood;
So, be you squeamish, take me by yourself
And leave the bell alone!

JANE.

Shall I ring, my lady?

LADY ANNE.

No, don't!

LADY BLANCHE.

You hear!—You mark?—You know your cue?

You have not been yon lady's maid in vain?
You're of no use!—Why loiter here?—Begone!

LADY ANNE.

I can command my maid myself!

LADY BLANCHE.

You can!
But better now that I command than you,
For on rebellion clearly is she bent,
Seeing her absence leaves us two alone!
By all the arrows ever Cupid shot,
By all the hearts that ever rued his bow,
Thou art jealous of thy mistress!

JANE.

Sir!

LADY BLANCHE.

Thou art!
Thou wouldst we still were standing in the hall;
Thou wouldst my errand there were still to tell;
Thou wouldst the vails I gave thee in advance
Were still to pay—yea, thou wouldst give them back
To have them paid again! I am willing—but
There is a time—there is a place—and this
Is neither place, nor time—avoid thee, then!
For, were my love the fraught of twenty men,
Yet of one man I cannot well make two,
And though the lady's beauty tracks the maid's,
Yet must the lady's self precedence take!
So, Fondness!—leave the room!—Nay then—

JANE (*retreating from* LADY BLANCHE).

I am gone! [*Goes out.*

LADY ANNE.

How wrong may thrive by sheer audacity,

While, with amaze, propriety gives way
Before the thing she scorns!

LADY BLANCHE.

Give me a kiss!

LADY ANNE.

A kiss!—I never yet gave kiss to man!

LADY BLANCHE.

You have kiss'd me many a time! Women forget
Their girlhood days! Their lofty age o'erlooks
Such tiny things!

LADY ANNE.

Kiss'd thee!

LADY BLANCHE.

When we have stroll'd
Along green lanes in honeysuckle time,
With thrilling throats mocking the merry birds;
When we have chased each other 'mong the sheaves,
Whose ears have lent us gold to make us crowns;
When, forced to keep the house in winter, of
Our plays we have made fires to warm ourselves;
Or when we have coax'd spring on with primroses,
Till hedge-rows leaved, and trees were all a-bloom!
I have kiss'd thee all these times, not to recount
How often we have sat on the same chair,
Or made a chair of one another's lap
On the same carpet roll'd—slept in one bed!

LADY ANNE (*shrieks*).

Ah!

LADY BLANCHE.

You may shriek.—There was no shrieking then—
In short, were comates more than hand or glove,
For still were we together!—Kiss me, Anne!

LADY ANNE.

Hoa! help!

LADY BLANCHE.

Why, don't you know me, simpleton?

LADY ANNE.

Blanche!

LADY BLANCHE (*bowing*).

At your service.

LADY ANNE.

What may this forebode?

LADY BLANCHE.

Why, victory! I cannot tell thee now!
I came to put my masquerade to proof!

LADY ANNE.

'Tis excellent!

LADY BLANCHE.

And so, in verity
You took me for a man!

LADY ANNE.

In verity.

LADY BLANCHE.

The dress becomes me?—Eh?

LADY ANNE.

To admiration!

LADY BLANCHE.

Is not my carriage very like a man's?
Have I not caught his tyrant strut?

LADY ANNE.

You have!

LADY BLANCHE.

The style with which he bears his empty head?

LADY ANNE.

You have!

LADY BLANCHE.

His frown when he would scare a man?

LADY ANNE.

You have.

LADY BLANCHE.

His smile when he would please a woman?

LADY ANNE.

You have.

LADY BLANCHE.

When thus I poise me on one foot,
Planting at ease the other, with one hand
In my breast, the other at my side, with arm
Akimbo, say you were not in my secret,
Would you not take your oath I was a man?

LADY ANNE.

I would!

LADY BLANCHE.

'Twill do! Kiss me, dear Anne, again!

LADY ANNE.

I hear a step.

LADY BLANCHE.

Keep quiet, will you, Anne!

JANE (*running on*).

Madam—O la!

[*Stopping short at seeing* LADY ANNE *with her head on* LADY BLANCHE'S *shoulder, while* LADY BLANCHE *kisses her.*

LADY BLANCHE.

How envy stops her breath!
You need not go—we do not mind you—well!
Your errand—if you have one? Much I doubt
'Twas jealousy that brought you back again!

LADY ANNE (*still lolling on* LADY BLANCHE).

What is it, Jane?

LADY BLANCHE.

You see we're quite at home
With one another. Well, what is it, sweetheart?

JANE.

Sir Philip Brilliant waits to see my lady.

LADY BLANCHE.

Show him up stairs.

JANE.

Well, if I ever dream'd—

LADY BLANCHE.

She scarce can move for very spite—Begone!

[JANE *goes out.*

LADY ANNE.

What shall be done?

LADY BLANCHE.

Done?—Let them show him up!
I am sure I make as good a man as he is!
How changed Sir Philip is!—How grave he grows!
I half believe my empire there is done!—
Why staid you yester evening from the ball?—
I ne'er saw man so alter'd as Sir Philip!
He thinks! He does! Looks pensive, as I live!
What brings him here, dear Anne?

LADY ANNE (*hesitating*).

To learn of me
How to make love to you.

LADY BLANCHE.

Learn to make love
To me! How long since you have open'd school?

You ne'er gave lesson on that art before!
But wit does wonders on emergency!—
Anne!—They say teachers learn the while they teach!
Take care!—Amercy, where's your old maid's dress?
What do you teach Sir Philip?

LADY ANNE.

We read Latin
Together.

LADY BLANCHE.

Anne!—I can translate your Latin
Better than you can. Here your pupil comes!

[*Enter* SIR PHILIP.

An o'ergrown boy, methinks, to go to school!
But such a one, if once he takes to tasks,
Makes progress.—Pays he thee in coin or kind?
Coin!—No such item in the schedule broad
Of love's estate, composed of things as light
As sunshine!—air!—the odour air exhales!
The softest sound it lends its limber wing!
Not that it always, yet, escheweth things
More tangible, begot of hands and lips!
Farewell! I never saw so clear a dawn!

LADY ANNE.

Dawn? It is day.

LADY BLANCHE.

'Tis dawn will grow to day!
I tell thee, Anne, twas e'en Aurora's self
That now I spied—that early, modest maid
Who opes the curtains of the sleeping sun,
And, blushing, flies his gaze! Permit my lips
To press your hand.—Now, mark my bow! (*Aside.*) Adieu!

[LADY BLANCHE *bows to* SIR PHILIP, *and goes out.*

SIR PHILIP (*uneasily*).

A handsome youth !

LADY ANNE.

Umph ! Well enough !

SIR PHILIP.

He seems
An old acquaintance, for he kiss'd your hand
Right lovingly !

LADY ANNE.

I have known him rather long.

SIR PHILIP.

I would I had not come !

LADY ANNE.

Why, prithee ?

SIR PHILIP.

As
My call was out of time.

LADY ANNE.

Not so, Sir Philip,
The gentleman was just about to go.

SIR PHILIP.

I am glad I came not sooner.

LADY ANNE.

Had you, sir,
'Twere all the same to me—except the pleasure
Of seeing you had been some minutes older !

SIR PHILIP.

You make me happy.

LADY ANNE.

What's the matter with him ?
Sir Philip cannot be in love with me !
Yet Lady Blanche would so insinuate—

Hang her! to note my cheek!—It had not burn'd
Except through her!—Why, what a world it is!
What wicked thoughts come into people's heads!
Behoves I watch myself!—We meet too often!
We are too much alone—O far too much!
His tasks must end, if he begins to love!
He has not told me so!—I'll wait till then!
I wonder, was he pensive as she said,
Or did she fancy it? Sir Philip.

SIR PHILIP.

Madam?

LADY ANNE.

I pray you, how went off the ball last night?

SIR PHILIP.

Oh, admirably well!

LADY ANNE.

I knew it! She
Was jesting! I hate jests! Nine times in ten
They are out of season! 'Twas a pleasant evening?

SIR PHILIP.

Very!

LADY ANNE.

I knew it!—What can change a man
In a moment!—Can he doff himself as soon
As his coat? The days of miracles are over!
And so you pass'd a very pleasant evening?
Whom danced you with—the Countess?

SIR PHILIP.

Nobody.

LADY ANNE.

You play'd at cards—who was your partner? She?

SIR PHILIP.

No one!

LADY ANNE.

They gave you music?—You can sing,
I have heard you sing a second to the Countess.
A capital second!—I was pleased with it.
That am not mov'd with trifles!—Did you sing
Last night together?

SIR PHILIP.

No; I sang with no one.

LADY ANNE.

A solo then?

SIR PHILIP.

I did not sing at all!

LADY ANNE.

Singing is very well in its way; but many
Love conversation better.

SIR PHILIP.

Very many!

LADY ANNE.

For mine own part, give me a corner, with
A friend I love to talk with, and the song
May hold its peace for me!

SIR PHILIP.

I feel as you do!

LADY ANNE.

The Countess can talk well.

SIR PHILIP.

Surprisingly—

LADY ANNE.

When she likes it. Was she in the vein last night?

SIR PHILIP.

I did not note!—I saw not much of her.
I was not in the vein for company.

LADY ANNE.

Pray you, Sir Philip, who were at the ball?

SIR PHILIP.

Upon my word, I scarce remember who!
I better could recal who was not there!

LADY ANNE.

Who was not there?

SIR PHILIP.

Why, you!

LADY ANNE.

That sounds like love!
'Tis well I be upon my guard in time!
Repel the foe before he can make head!
Yet to be like a thing, is not to be
The thing itself! It may not, yet, be love.
The enemy I take up arms against
Myself may conjure up!—alarums sound,
Where no attack is meant—That would be hard
On him!—to lose, without a crime, the friend
He stands so much in need of—then the credit
I must forego, if I forego the task
I took in hand, to make a man of him!
See how he cons his lesson like a boy!
Get the desk ready—I shall follow you.

SIR PHILIP.

Here is a passage, like to master me.
Each word I know, yet can't divine the sense!

LADY ANNE.

Show it me. Dear Sir Philip, you forget
Your syntax! Here is an ellipsis, sir!

SIR PHILIP.

An ellipsis?

LADY ANNE.

Yes; look at that genitive!
It stands alone! What governs it, Sir Philip?

SIR PHILIP.

The noun is understood!—I have found the sense;
Yet wits, more quick, miss seeing things as plain!

LADY ANNE.

What does he mean?

SIR PHILIP.

The want is profit to me,
Of such instructress put me so in need,
I progress!—Will gets through a heap of work!
Dear Lady Anne, I love to read with you! [*Goes out.*

LADY ANNE.

He loves to read with me! were it charity
If that I construed into loving me?
He stands too much in awe of me to love me!
But, say he does—what business is't of mine?
Let him look to it—I have not the fever,
He caught it not from me. I'm in sound health,
Was never half so well! my mind sees clearer!
My heart feels lighter. I am twice myself———
He loves not any one!—or if he does,
'Tis clear as open day 'tis not the Countess! [*Goes out.*

SCENE II.

COLONEL BLOUNT'S *House.—A Room.*

Enter COLONEL BLOUNT.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Mine honour'd parents have I seen at last!
Received their welcome, with their blessing crown'd!
My brother mocks my search—and so does she
Whom to have lost, makes loss of fortune's gains.
Nor hope nor clue to hope! The house whereat
We used to meet hath other tenant got,
The former gone they know not whither; if
Alive or dead! For hours and hours I walk
The streets in vain! she never crosses me.
I light on all the world but her I seek!

Enter WILLIAM.

WILLIAM.

A gentleman would speak with you.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

His name?

WILLIAM.

I ask'd his name, and in reply he told me
Again his errand—wonder'd how my master
Could keep a male attendant at his door,
And maids to hire in bunches!—any one
Of whom could draw the bolt as well!—would look
A thousand times more pleasing—speak more sweetly,
And, maybe, when a pretty fellow call'd

With kisses season answers—then with a stamp
Dismiss'd me.

LADY BLANCHE (*entering still disguised*).

Colonel Blount, your humble servant!
Place chairs! excuse the freedom! I am at home
Whene'er I light upon a gentleman,
And you, I know, are one!—You know your place, sir,
And know, of course, the way to it—which, as
I take it, is the hall!—you understand me?
The hall! (WILLIAM *goes out.*) Your servant, Colonel Blount, again!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

You know me, sir?

LADY BLANCHE.

A man beloved of fame, sir,
Is known to many who are strange to him.
I own that I make bold; but keep your frown
Until I give my reason. Colonel Blount,
Some men make bold through fear, some through the lack on't.
Some to seem honest—for the adage runs,
That knavery puts on a glossy suit
While honesty goes rough!—and some make bold
Through lightness of dear hearts and wantonness
Of healthy frankness!—I am such a man!
To free your mind at once from jealousy,
If not to win your confidence, I tell you
I wait on you—touching a lady, sir!—
He takes it very coolly (*aside*). Colonel Blount
I wait on you, touching a lady, sir!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I heard you, sir—I am not deaf.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

As well
Be deaf as dull. The lady, sir, I am sure,
By certain signs affects you—and, aware
How through reserve, or self-mistrust, or something,
Hearts form'd to mingle oft miss one another,
And being of the lady's blood partaker,
And knowing you, by fame, a man of honour,
The secret I have guess'd, sir, I have come
To tell you, sir.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Well, sir?

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

The man 's a stock!
"Well, sir!"—shall I go on? I will!—but only
Because I have begun. Whom reckon you
The beauty of the court?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

The beauty?

LADY BLANCHE (*off her guard*).

Well?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Your patience, sir, I am not skill'd in beauty;
Perhaps I may mistake.

LADY BLANCHE (*again off her guard*).

You do not know
The beauty of the court?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

To say the truth
I lay light value upon beauty only.
Then is it hard to say what beauty is.
You like the Roman outline, I the Grecian—
Where 's beauty? Beauty, may I trust report,
Hath somewhat questionable reputation, too!

Some say it is intolerably proud;
Some, empty—full of nothing but itself;
Some, by no means good temper'd—some assert
'Tis mercenary and not over honest:
This may, in part, be spleen, but part is truth.
Whence am I jealous of what men call beauty,
And own it—but when beauty, modestly,
Attends the mind, like a fair handmaiden
Who knows her place, and serves a noble mistress,
Then could I worship beauty, sir; for then
Its proper worth not only doffs no favour,
But wins enhancement from the worth it waits on!

LADY BLANCHE.

Had you not, Colonel Blount, some time or other
A falling out with beauty? Come! You had;
She slighted you one time—I know she did!
But 'twas your own fault—I 'll be bound it was!
You did not manage well, sir. You were proud—
Lack'd patience—maybe, art—and never dreaming
That beauty's smiles go oft in masquerade,
Took one for a frown, and off!—when, had you tarried,
The thing you thought a frown had proved a smile,
As the dull morning breeds the sunny day.
I know the sex: there is not one of them
But 's art in something!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Do not say, not one!

LADY BLANCHE (*forgetting herself*).

I say, not one! What know you of the sex?
What knows this man—that man—or any man—
Of the sex? Is it not plain to all the world,
A girl at fifteen is in wit a woman!

And what's a man at twenty but a boy?
When I was only thirteen—

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Sir!—

LADY BLANCHE.

Nay, sir,
Don't interrput me!—When I was but thirteen—(*recovering*
I had an aunt who loved me passing well, *herself.*)
And lest I should be overmatch'd by women,
School'd me in all their arts.—You never had
An aunt like her, nor any other man,
Whence I disparaged you—I beg your pardon!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

'Tis granted freely.

LADY BLANCHE.

I am beholden to you;
And, more to be so, would entreat you own,
If when I challenged you to name just now
The beauty of the court, you entertain'd not
Suspicion of the lady?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Not the least!

LADY BLANCHE.

Why, Colonel Blount, you are not blind! You know
Who has the fairest skin, the finest hair—
The finest features, finest shoulders, arms
And wrists, and hands.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Stop, sir!

LADY BLANCHE.

I meant to stop,
For if by these you fail to recognise her,
The lady's waist, her ancles, and her feet
Were thrown away upon you!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I but stopp'd you
To say I know the Countess, Lady Blanche!

LADY BLANCHE.

Well, sir?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Well, sir?

LADY BLANCHE.

I come on her account.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

You were welcome, sir, upon your own account!
Your pleasure?

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

I could brain him, so I could!
(*Aloud*) She is the lady whom I spoke of, sir!—
(*Aside*) Oh, marble! is it true you see and hear!
I 'll speak out plainly! (*Aloud*) Sir, I think 'tis time
The Countess married?—What think you?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Indeed
I never thought about it!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

I could sell him
To slavery!—'Tis a fine lion, though,
Of which I 'd give my eyes to have the taming!
(*Aloud*) I think 'tis time a woman marries when
She takes a fancy to a man!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

That plight,
Methinks, can scarce befal the Countess, sir!
The lady is enamour'd of herself!
She cannot love another!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

I could be
The death of him. (*Aloud*) What would you wager, now,

She is not in love with you? You know the signs
A woman is in love? She has them all, sir!
Thinks much, speaks little, sighs incontinently,
Falls off in appetite, hates company,
Shuns pleasure, loves to pass the time alone,
Makes of one hand a pillow for her cheek,
One for her heart of the other—sitting thus
For hours together!—Is not that the picture
Of one in love? And if you come to tears,
She could weep rivers, would she—but give me
The drop, could turn into a flood—but won't,
Hangs on the lid as though 'twould fall—but doesn't;
Seems as 'twould ever stay there, but is gone
You know not how nor whither!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

You surprise me!
I saw the Countess at the ball last night—
Look'd never woman better!

LADY BLANCHE.

Look'd!—

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I know
She paints.

LADY BLANCHE.

Paints, sir?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

She does! 'Tis clear
As that she breathes and moves.

LADY BLANCHE.

Does that offend you?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Sir, I'll be frank! I love not simulation,
Nor can believe it may be practised safely

E'en in as small a thing as that we speak of!
'Tis well when she who paints confesses it;
Yet she confesses vanity besides,
Which is not well. But, for the other sort,
Women who pass a cheek for what it is not:
I always fear'd the probity, within,
Would follow that without; and thoughts and words
Might wear a hue that was not native to them.
For, if one fraud will blast a character,
What follows but that honesty is perfect,
Or nothing?—holds throughout?—is everywhere
Or nowhere?—I refer to actions!—'Tis
Their actions which determine what men are!
Whate'er of me men see must be myself;
What I myself do see—I do not mean
To advertise my heart—that is no man's duty—
I have my weakness I'm not bound to own—
Before it masters me!—but, by my honour,
I take no credit for the grace I have not!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

'Tis a strange man!—a man of a new species!
(*Aloud*) Well, sir, she paints!—What else?—What other fault
Do you find with her face? Her colour you dispute,—
Perhaps you'll grant her eyes to be her own,
And they are counted fine ones!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

They are bold ones!

LADY BLANCHE.

Bold ones!—You do not like their fire perhaps?
You should not, could it scorch you! (*Aside.*)

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Not their fire
Do I complain of. 'Tis the mood that lights it
I quarrel with!

LADY BLANCHE.

What mood? (*Aside*) I grow to hate him!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

The mood of the coquette—whom on my honour
I hold 'mongst women an anomaly!
For, much as you disparaged woman now,
Making her creature more or less of art!
I think, if not in her, then nowhere else
Is truthful nature found; for she is framed
Of elements she needs not blush to own,
Being of the temper less of earth than heaven!
And which, perforce, establish her sincere—
Pitiful—modest—and, surpassing all,
Single in love, which is Heaven's prototype!
Her love is love! Therein she is a barque
Sea-worthy 'gainst all weathers! likelier
Than any prow that ever quitted port
To make her voyage, whatsoe'er the wind,
And, if it blows, to ride the tempest through!

LADY BLANCHE.

He is not so bad! How handsome look'd he now,
More than his features warrant him, as though
The charm of beauty lay not in the face!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Now, what has a coquette to such a being
Pertaining? Form and feature! Nothing more!
Of woman the least part! She cannot love;

For woman, loving, cannot breathe, or move,
Or think, or feel, but love's in all she does!
And, saying that she cannot love, say what
She can do, to her honour will redound?
I know not, sir; do you?

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

Yes; she can hate,
And heartily.—Why, what a fright I took
For a good-looking man!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

The Countess now—

LADY BLANCHE.

So please you, we shall speak no more about her!
(*Aside.*) I wonder is he smit with any other—
(*Aloud.*) Excuse a question, Sir!—Are you in love?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Yes, sir, I am—but love, I fear, in vain.

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

In vain? Some prude perhaps has snared his heart.
I hope she has! (*Aloud.*) Is not your love return'd?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I know not!—I would fain believe it was.

LADY BLANCHE.

Believe it was?—What! dropp'd she never word
That Hope could make a meal of?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Never.—Silence
Was still her answer when I press'd my suit.

LADY BLANCHE.

A prude, as I'm alive! a thorough prude!
I know what kind of maid your mistress is!

She keeps you at great distance! plucks away
Her hand, if you press it—if you strive to keep
Her waist in durance, sets the measure of
The room 'twixt you and her; and would you kiss her,
Prepares to shriek!—You should make trial of her!
She understands your humour! I'll be bound
It is a prude you love!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

You wrong her, sir!
She is no prude! No freedom you have named
I ever took with her, or dared to take!

LADY BLANCHE.

Or dared to take! I told you, Colonel Blount,
You knew not women. Dragons, sir, are fables:
So used my aunt to say, and she went further;
Where'er you think you see one, set it down
'Tis whalebone work and buckram; which, without
The fear of sting or flame, you may engage,
And find more peace than there did threaten fury!
Dear Colonel Blount, you love a prude, and think
You have found a miracle of modesty!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

No more, sir!

LADY BLANCHE.

Colonel Blount, you love a prude!
'Tis ever thus with men particular;
Men that in squeamishness would outdo women!
That knit a brow at this, and shrug at that,
Take shocks at horrors that amount to nothing;
Whom nothing will content except perfection,
Which when at last they find,—they find they are losers
By many a better thing they met before,

And pass'd in chase of it! I give you joy, sir,
To love a prude.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Nay, sir—

LADY BLANCHE.

Yea, sir; a prude!
I see her!—She's before me!—Just the eyes,
I know she has! the use she makes of them!—
How fond they are of the ground! I warrant you,
Her thoughts are not of their taste!—Gentle primness!
There is a mouth after your own chaste fancy!
Look at the lips, how they hug one another,
Like innocents that cling at thought of parting!—
If I were near them!—What a sober cheek!
Durst ever laughter come there?—I'll be bound
When 'tis alone or keeping company
With one that understands it! Colonel Blount,
I'll court your mistress, and I'll carry her
In a week! She is a prude, fair Colonel Blount!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Hold, sir!—On no account that bears not proof
Asperse the character of her I love!
Say that I boast because I think her fair,
She can spare beauty, 'tis her least desert!
But when in wantonness you doubt her heart,
Wherein do I in seriousness confide,
Which to her beauty is, what to the earth
The sun!—the radiant fountain, gives it light;
You tax my patience past what it can bear,
And all the man in me is up in arms!

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

'Tis plain he loves—and oh! how well he loves!

What is't to me ! I feel a sickness which
I never felt before ! The world I'd give
To see the woman that has conquer'd him ;
I would I were away !—My feigned part
I have play'd too long, can scarce keep up and wish,
And heartily, I ne'er had play'd at all !
Up heart and bear me through !—(*Aloud.*) Good day, fair sir,
I thank you for the audience you've vouchsafed !
But wish you had not loved a prude !

COLONEL BLOUNT (*drawing*).

'Sdeath, sir !

LADY BLANCHE (*alarmed*).

Stop !—(*recovering*) draw upon me under your own roof !

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I am corrected ! You must pardon me ;
But, to keep patience, I must quit the room.

LADY BLANCHE.

Farewell, sir—but, believe me, you will find
The lady is a prude !

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Away, sir ! [*Goes out.*

LADY BLANCHE.

Prude !
Jilt, shrew, whate'er she is, would I were she !

[*Goes out.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The House of LADY ANNE.

Enter JANE *and* LADY BLANCHE.

LADY BLANCHE.

AT home to me! Why not at home to all?
What ails her? Is she ill? When saw she last
Sir Philip?

JANE.

Yesterday.

LADY BLANCHE.

He was not here
To-day? They have quarrell'd. She's in love with him.
I thought 'twould come to this. Play governess
To a pupil with a beard! Pore cheek-by-cheek
Over a book with him! A score to one
The cheeks would meet. I wonder, then, the odds
The lips would keep asunder.

JANE.

You have guess'd it.

LADY BLANCHE.

He kiss'd her? How know you?

JANE.

I saw it, madam,
Entering the study unawares. Their backs
Were towards me: they were sitting side by side

Before the reading-desk, and as I oped
The door he kiss'd her. She was on her feet
In a moment.

LADY BLANCHE.

At the kiss or at the door.

JANE.

I'll not be positive.

LADY BLANCHE.

But you can guess.
Or if you cannot I can.—She turn'd round,
And then she quarrell'd with the kiss—Go to!
You have made mischief. 'Twere a sinless kiss
Had not you look'd upon it. Get you gone,
You have wicked eyes! Go send your lady to me.

[JANE *goes out.*

My heart is gone! The symptoms yesterday
I feign'd, I feel to-day. To mock, to catch,
So runs the saying, and 'tis true. I mock'd—
Dissembled love for the young 'prentice boy,
And what I pass'd before for, now I am.
A maid indeed in love—in love with him
Who having leap'd the pale that bade him dwell
Aloof from gentle blood were now my match;
But he has all forgot the yeoman's maid.

[LADY BLANCHE *sits disconsolately. Enter* LADY ANNE, *who draws a chair beside her, and likewise sits.*

LADY ANNE.

Well, Blanche.

LADY BLANCHE.

Well, Anne. You have quarrell'd with Sir Philip.

LADY ANNE.

And you have lost your pains with Colonel Blount.

LADY BLANCHE.

We have play'd our cards like fools.

LADY ANNE.

I fear we have.

LADY BLANCHE.

I know we have. My game is gone.

LADY ANNE.

And so
I fear is mine.

LADY BLANCHE.

Why, Anne, you're not in love?

LADY ANNE.

I doubt I am. Are you in love, dear Blanche?

LADY BLANCHE.

I know I am. What could possess you, Anne,
To set yourself up at an age like yours
For an old maid? Would you be wiser than
Your mother was? Had she been of your mind,
Where had you been?

LADY ANNE.

What could possess you, Anne,
To give me credit for't, and you yourself
A woman? Think you there was ever one
Who led a life of single blessedness,
And with her will? You did forget your mother
As well as I. Children had better take
Example from their parents; they are copies
More like to spoil than mend by altering.

LADY BLANCHE.

My mother was a wife at twenty-four.

Past that, I'm like to be no wife at all.
This comes of scorning men. How could you think
Women were e'er design'd to live without them?
Look at men's trades—no woman e'er could follow.
A pretty smith you'd make, to blow a bellows
And set an anvil ringing with a hammer.

LADY ANNE.

Or you a pretty mason, with a mallet
Shaping a block of freestone with a chisel!

LADY BLANCHE.

You could not be a doctor, nor a surgeon.

LADY ANNE.

Nor you a lawyer—would you wear the wig?

LADY BLANCHE.

I'd starve first. You would never make a sailor.

LADY ANNE.

Nor you a soldier.

LADY BLANCHE.

I could fight. I'd like
To fight with Colonel Blount.

LADY ANNE.

What! has he chafed you?

LADY BLANCHE.

Mortally! Of my beauty made as light
As 'twere a dress would only wear a day!
Averr'd I painted, which, although I did,
Designing not to show, how durst he see?
Denied that I had eyes. Have I not eyes?
Call'd me coquette, anatomised me so,
My heart is all one mortifying sore,
Rankling with pain, which, 'gainst all equity,
I pay him for with love, instead of hate.

LADY ANNE.

Why, Blanche, can it be you ?

LADY BLANCHE.

Can you believe
That love could be constrain'd ? That one could love
Against one's will ? That one could spite one's self
To love another ? Love and hate at once ?
I could kill Colonel Blount—could hack him up !
Make mincemeat of him—and could kill myself
For thinking I could do it, he is so full
Of wisdom, goodness, manliness, and grace !
I honour him, admire him, yea, affect him ;
Yet more than him affect the 'prentice boy,
Whose blushing cheek attested for his heart
That love was an unknown, unlook'd-for guest,
Ne'er entertain'd before, and greeted, now,
With most confused, overpow'red welcome !

LADY ANNE.

You loved the 'prentice boy !—you thought not that
Before.

LADY BLANCHE.

Because it seem'd too slight for thought.
A spark I did not heed, because a spark !
Never suspected 'twould engender flame
That kept in secret kindling, nor was found
Before the blaze that now keeps raging on,
As from the smother springs the fiercest fire.

LADY ANNE.

Well ! make confession to him.

LADY BLANCHE.

Make my will
And die ! He loves no more. The fire is out !

Vanish'd!—the very embers blown away!—
The memory even of my features gone,
At sight of which it burst with such a glare
As crimson'd all the welkin of his face,
And mock'd, as you would think, extinguishing!
Nor rests it there—another fire is lit
And blazes to another deity!
There is the altar burn'd before for me,
But to another does the incense rise.
There is the temple where I once was shrined,
But to another's image sacred now;
And mine profaned, unbased, cast down, cast out,
Never to know its worshipper again!

LADY ANNE.

Thou dost not weep.

LADY BLANCHE.

I do!

LADY ANNE.

You are in love!

LADY BLANCHE.

To be sure I am. O! never women more
Deceived themselves than we did! To believe
It rested with ourselves to love or not;
As we at once could have and lack a heart;
As though we were not made of flesh and blood;
As though we were not women—women—skiff's
Sure to be toss'd by passion as by waves
The barque that 's launch'd into the open sea!
Why don't you weep?—you would for sympathy,
Did you but love as I do.

LADY ANNE.

Love as you do!

The loves of twenty women would not make
The heap of mine.

LADY BLANCHE.

And mine among the number?
Now look you, Anne, the moiety of my love
Would make your heap.

LADY ANNE.

Would make my heap? Its tithe
Would beat your moiety!

LADY BLANCHE.

The measure of it?

LADY ANNE.

The earth!

LADY BLANCHE.

I 'll give thee in the sun and moon!
My love holds measure with the universe!
That mocketh bounds.

LADY ANNE.

Ne'er woman loved as I do.

LADY BLANCHE.

Ne'er woman loved at all, compared to me!
In me the passion, Anne, is nature! what
I feel you only have a notion of.
I love by heart; you only, Anne, by rote!
Peace, I will have it so!—Upon my life
We are a pair of most renown'd old maids!

Enter JANE.

JANE.

So please you, madam, have I now your leave?

LADY ANNE.

Leave!—Whither go you?—O, I had forgot.
I gave her leave to spend the afternoon
With Charlotte, your fair maid.

LADY BLANCHE.

She gives a treat
To-day. She begg'd of me a room or two ;
I bad her take the freedom of the house,
And with her friends keep holiday, for she
My foster-sister is, as well as maid !

LADY ANNE.

Is 't not a wedding, Jane ?

JANE.

I am bound, my lady,
To secrecy.

LADY ANNE.

Pshaw ! secrecy to me ?

JANE.

It is a wedding.

LADY ANNE.

And whom marries she ?

JANE.

They tell me Colonel Blount.

LADY BLANCHE.

They slander him !
It is impossible !

LADY ANNE.

You have your leave !
Go, Jane !

[JANE *goes out.*

LADY BLANCHE (*calling after* JANE).

But go not forth—wait in the ante-room
For me ! Behoves I further question her !

LADY ANNE.

Would you betray yourself ?

LADY BLANCHE.

Betray myself !—

I have betray'd myself—I am betray'd
By him, by you,—but most of all myself!—
There 's no accounting for the tastes of men!—
I 'll see this wedding!

LADY ANNE.

Wherefore?

LADY BLANCHE.

Know I not!—
To stop the banns!

LADY ANNE.

Play rival to thy maid?

LADY BLANCHE.

The maid is betters to the mistress now!
I must be present at these nuptials, Anne!
I think it cannot be as she reports!
And yet, again, I doubt, and fear it is!
If so, I'll see him give away his hand,
And to escape detection from the rest,
Attire me as the maid he knew me first—
The yeoman's daughter whom he saw and loved
Follow me, Anne, and see how it will end.

LADY ANNE.

What profit can it bring thee, proves it he?

LADY BLANCHE.

I know not what! I scarce know what I do
I have an aim, yet know not what it is!
I shall expect you, Anne.—Be sure you come!
Anne, turns it out, as much I fear it will,
You'll have to answer for't.

LADY ANNE.

For what, dear Blanche?

LADY BLANCHE.

That I should love, and die a lost old maid.

[LADY BLANCHE *goes out.*

LADY ANNE.

Full of her own predicament, she casts
No thought on mine. What will become of me,
Returns not fair Sir Philip to the charge,
Dishearten'd by repulse, which I confess
I gave him more in show than earnestness?
That's he!—I know his step!—Come in, Sir Philip!

Enter SIR PHILIP.

SIR PHILIP.

I have made bold to call.

LADY ANNE.

I see you have call'd;
I do not see you have made bold!

SIR PHILIP.

I came
To ask your pardon.

LADY ANNE.

O!—for yesterday.
Yes; I was angry!—You surprised me so!
It was not *what* you did, but *how* you did it.
And then my maid to see it!—What knew she
How you intended it? Such things—you know
I view them philosophically—go
For what they are meant for. There is a father's kiss,
A brother's kiss, a friend's kiss—and a kiss—
Of another kind.—You guess the kind I mean—
Not like the kiss you gave me yesterday.

SIR PHILIP.

I am not sure of that.—Nay I'll be honest!

LADY ANNE.

Do so, Sir Philip! Honesty is a grace
That makes amends for worlds of awkward things.

SIR PHILIP.

With safety would I might be honest still.

LADY ANNE.

You cannot tell, you know, unless you try!

SIR PHILIP.

Trying, perhaps I fail.

LADY ANNE.

Perhaps succeed.
But trying not, be sure you won't succeed.

SIR PHILIP.

Dear Lady Anne, I feel—I know not what.

LADY ANNE.

I cannot know unless you tell me what.
How do you feel?

SIR PHILIP.

Most strangely.

LADY ANNE.

And how long?

SIR PHILIP.

Why ever since I came to school to you.
I am smitten, Lady Anne.

LADY ANNE.

What mean you, sir?
Smitten by me? I have not got the plague!
I don't feel ill!—Can I be ailing, sir?
Do you think me ill?—Do you know anything
About the pulse? Feel mine! How am I?

SIR PHILIP.

Nay,
Allow me time to tell.

LADY ANNE.

O! take your time!

SIR PHILIP.

A most sweet hand you have, dear Lady Anne.
Here is a palm, and here are fingers too!

LADY ANNE.

I hope there are.

SIR PHILIP.

And joints.

LADY ANNE.

Who has not palms,
Fingers, and joints, Sir Philip, that has hands?

SIR PHILIP.

But hands that have all these are not the same!
Some will repel, and some attract the touch;
Some will delight, and some offend the eye.
This palm hath softness, which the eider-down
Were richer if it knew! Those tapering fingers
Are in their dazzling whiteness, and their shape,
Rays far more precious than e'er crown'd a star,
That penetrate the heart with light and warmth
In which the sun is poor!—and here are joints
That mock the cheek with dimples—play on smiles—
As hinges could be fashion'd of such things!
O there's a world of riches in a hand!
Treasures that count with feeling, thought, and sense,
And most of all—in this one.

LADY ANNE.

Pray, Sir Philip,
How is my pulse?

SIR PHILIP.

I cannot find your pulse—Can't tell the pulse—
Know nothing of the pulse.—You are quite well;
But I am very ill, dear Lady Anne.

LADY ANNE.

Indeed! Sir Philip. Let me try my skill!—
The hand keeps steady while we feel the pulse—
No signs of ailment here.

SIR PHILIP.

No fever?

LADY ANNE.

No:
The even-plodding beat of sober health!
And yet thou mayst be ill.—Art rheumatic?

SIR PHILIP.

No:

LADY ANNE.

Art thou subject to the quinsey?

SIR PHILIP.

No.

LADY ANNE.

Feel'st rigors now and then—the certain signs
Of brooding mischief?

SIR PHILIP.

No.

LADY ANNE.

Hadst ever threat'ning
Of a lock'd jaw?

SIR PHILIP.

No!

LADY ANNE.

Hast thou got a head-ache?

SIR PHILIP.

No!

LADY ANNE.

If thou'rt ill, it must be somewhere! How
Feel'st thou about the region of the heart?

SIR PHILIP.

'Tis there, dear Lady Anne; 'tis there!

LADY ANNE.

What 's there ?

SIR PHILIP.

My illness !

LADY ANNE.

What, suspect you, is it ?

SIR PHILIP.

Love !

LADY ANNE.

A dunce !—I might have known it all along !—
Of course !—you are in love with Lady Blanche !

SIR PHILIP.

Nay, Lady Anne, I am in love with you !

LADY ANNE.

In love with me ! Why, what can I have done
To make you so ?

SIR PHILIP.

Nothing with that intent,
But everything must work to such an end !
Made me—from nothing—which I was,—a man !
Almost a man—your work not yet complete,
But you will crown it, will you marry me.

LADY ANNE.

Sir Philip, we shall speak another time.

SIR PHILIP.

That other time will find another yet !
No time like the present, when the cause is good,
And the heart cheerily runs along with it !

LADY ANNE.

Give me a day !

SIR PHILIP.

What ! with such friends as these
To back me now ?

LADY ANNE.

What friends?

SIR PHILIP.

Your blushes, lady,
You fain would hide, but cannot!—and your eyes,
O'er which you drop those snowy veils, their lids,
To hide what they would tell—yet thus betray;
And your whole form shrinking with consciousness,
Which breathes such fears as fan the lover's hopes.
Dear Lady Anne—

LADY ANNE.

Sir Philip, here I am,
And judge me as a man of honour would
The maid he truly loves, and not in vain!
There—you have ta'en possession!—Loose me now,
And meet me presently at Lady Blanche's,
Whither by friendship am I summon'd straight!
And should obey, since love's behest is done.

[*They go out severally.*

SCENE THE LAST.

A Room in LADY BLANCHE'S.

Enter JOHN.

JOHN.

The knot is tied!—I am a married man,
And now I wish myself a single one!
Great people do not sort with me, their ways
Are so uncommon! 'Tis a serious thing
To marry! There throughout the ceremony

Sir Philip stood, with handkerchief to mouth,
Stifling his laughter; opposite, his friends,
Lords John and Stephen, lords although they be,
Tittering outright, and nudging one another.
Be this the mode with men of quality,
I know, in those beneath them, it would pass
For monstrously bad breeding! But the worst
Is yet to come!—The bride herself did laugh—
Laugh till her sides shook.—Yea, and I prepared
With a most lovely kerchief for the tears
I thought she would be drown'd in.—'Pon my life,
Great folks are no great things—but I am married!

ROBERT (*entering, handkerchief to mouth*).

What!—Colonel Blount alone!—Why, where's your bride?
Gone to recruit her spirits, I suppose,
After the ceremony! 'Twas a most
Affecting one!

JOHN.

You found it so.

ROBERT.

I did.
How near akin are moods most opposite!
I vow there 's not a pin's point difference
'Twixt tears and laughter.—Nay, 'tis known to all
Grief laughs as oft as weeps.

JOHN.

You mean it falls
Into hystericks.

ROBERT.

As I nearly did
To-day.

JOHN.

No!

ROBERT.

Yes, as I 'm a baronet!
Upon my life!—O, Colonel Blount, how well
You play'd the bridegroom!—so impressively.
I have seen moving things, but ne'er was moved
Before to-day! 'Twas well the clergyman
Was hackney'd in the ceremony, else
He never had got through with it!

JOHN.

Say you so?
This is another version of the story!
And did I play the bridegroom movingly?

ROBERT.

The bride, methinks, might satisfy you there.
I am sure I saw her tremble!

JOHN.

She did shake!

ROBERT

Indeed? 'Twas well she did not quite go off.

JOHN.

I thought 'twas all with mirth.

ROBERT.

Mirth, Colonel Blount!
I wish you could have seen and heard yourself!
You look'd and spoke!

JOHN.

How did I speak and look?
Pathetically?

ROBERT.

Spare me, gentle sir,
I lack your constancy!

JOHN.

My constancy !
It is my forte !—If there is one thing, sir,
Wherein, among the things that I excel in,
I do surpass myself, I may aver
It is my constancy. I see it now !
I have a way of speaking serious things,
And doing them, quite of my own !—The bride !

Enter CHARLOTTE, *supported by* JACOB *and* STEPHEN.

Permit me, noble friends ;—how does my wife ?

CHARLOTTE.

A little better !

JOHN.

Cruel that I was !
The ceremony was too much for you !
And 'twas my fault ! If I had dream'd of it,
I should have skipp'd my share, or rhymed it o'er.

CHARLOTTE.

I ne'er heard sermon so affected me,
And I have heard all kinds—charity ones,
And funeral ones—I may have wept at some,
But never was o'erpower'd until to-day !

JOHN.

Nay, think of it no more.

CHARLOTTE.

Each syllable spoke volumes to me.

JOHN.

You distress me, love !

CHARLOTTE.

I must give vent to what I feel, or drop !

JOHN.

Nay then, dear love, speak on.

CHARLOTTE.

You certainly
Were destined for the church.

JOHN.

O no!

CHARLOTTE.

You were!

JOHN.

Upon my honour, love, I tell thee no!

CHARLOTTE.

The gown and surplice little know their loss!
But stop! said I the church?—I meant the stage,
For there they have the art superlative
Of moving hearts, beleaguering them so,
Perforce they yield, and to the captors pay
Tribute incontinent of sighs and tears!

JOHN.

I do suspect the stage had been my forte!

CHARLOTTE.

What a tragedian, husband, had you made!

JOHN.

I think I had!

CHARLOTTE.

Were it a killing part,
No need of dagger, poison'd chalice, cord!
Your looks had slain without them.

JOHN.

I believe
The stage has lost a murderer in me!
I won't regret it, though; come, lady wife,
We now must feast, so let me lead thee home!

PETER (*entering*).

One Master Blount inquires for you below,
A dame along with him who seems his wife.

JOHN (*aside*).

My father and my mother!—Bid them hie
At noon to-morrow to the place they know
On Ludgate-hill.—I cannot see them here.

[PETER *goes out.*

CHARLOTTE.

Who wants to see you, husband?

JOHN.

Nobody.
A friend of such a sort as one may have
And know not; one may lose and never miss.

PETER (*re-entering*).

He is angry at your answer—there he stands
And will not quit the door.

JOHN.

Most shocking breeding;
Repeat my answer, sir, I cannot see him.

COLONEL BLOUNT (*bursting in, followed by* MASTER *and* MISTRESS BLOUNT. SIR PHILIP BRILLIANT *and* LADY ANNE, *who joins* LADY BLANCHE, *entering from another part of the chamber*).

Where is my brother?—may I call him so,
Who keeps his reverend parents at the door!
What means this, John—how comes it? What!—Art thou
My elder brother, and instruct'st me thus?
Endurest thou the roof that is too proud
To shelter these most loved and sacred heads?
Spurn'st not the threshold that admits thy feet,
And these most hallow'd ones forbids to pass?
Hold'st commerce with the host that takes thee in,
And those thou ow'st thy being to shuts out?
For surely host, roof, threshold are to blame;

For sacrilege 'gainst nature like to this,
And not the man with whom I share one blood.

JOHN.

There are times, brother, and occasions.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

None
For doing that which damns the precious soul;
And Heaven hath set our parents next itself
For piety, whose slight entaileth death!
Passing along with these most noble friends,
I saw our sire and mother at the door;
Paid them my duty; found they had traced thee hither,
Succeeding on the search that baffled me;
Learn'd the proud message thou hadst sent them down;
And gave 't reception, as became their son!
Up to them, brother! no excuses make
For what admits of none; but own thy fault,
And ask for pardon.

MISTRESS BLOUNT.

Husband, tell me now,
Is not a mother far the likeliest
To know her own son? Where is now thy John?
But look upon my Thomas! Gentleman
Or tradesman, he is the same!—would own thee, though
Thou still hadst apron on!—would smile at me,
Call'd I him now "Good Thomas!—Honest lad!—
Kind boy!" as, when he was thy 'prentice, John,
I used to do; and he did like to hear,
And now, I will be bound, would like as well.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

O mother, there are strains in boyhood heard,

As men that thrill us, as none other can!
But come, forgive my brother.

LADY ANNE (*coming forward*).

Blanche, a thought
Has struck me. Show thyself. Let him behold
The yeoman's maid again.—He is riveted!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

She is found.

LADY ANNE (*aside*).

My guess was right!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

It must be she!
The simple silent maid, in humble guise,
Whose beauty unpretending, without aid,
Made captive of me! Whom, although I left
I follow'd still—from whom that gap, they say,
Oblivion doth fill up—fatal to love—
Absence—could ne'er divide me, but became
A bed in which the stream of memory ran,
And gather'd flood in flowing.—Art not she?
O turn to me!—O let me see thy face,
The radiant impress of consummate woman,
Superlative from nature's hand alone,
Who, jealous of her master work, refused
Prosperity and rank a share in thee,
And made thee daughter, rare, of lowliness!
Will you not turn?

LADY BLANCHE.

Yes, will you guarantee
All risk thereby I run.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I do!

LADY BLANCHE.

Behold !

COLONEL BLOUNT.

The yeoman's maid ! were empress of the earth,
Did rank by beauty go !

LADY BLANCHE.

Know'st thou me not ?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Know I thee not ? Ay—by these eyes that see thee,
These ears that hear thee, and, beyond e'en these,
The heart that feasts on what they see and hear.

LADY BLANCHE.

Thou know'st me not ?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Art not the yeoman's maid ?

LADY BLANCHE.

I am, but was not she.—She was a sprite,
My wayward fancy for illusion raised,
Now marvellously turn'd to flesh and blood,
Through talisman of thy most noble worth !
None see you here beside the yeoman's maid ?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

None.

LADY BLANCHE.

Let me doff the hood I still kept on.
How say you now, sir ?

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Nothing do I see,
Except the yeoman's maid. I see the hood
Still in your modest coif and simple cloak.

LADY BLANCHE.

There then.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

The Countess.

LADY BLANCHE.

No.—The yeoman's maid.
Spare what I was, for what I have become,
If what I have become, content thee, take me!
Or take me not, none other e'er shall own me!
Now do I see how wealth and rank themselves.
Estranging nature from simplicity,
May root her graces up, and in their stead
Plant blemishes;—but I have wider swerv'd,
Misled by vanity and pride of sway,
Never suspecting that to hold one heart,
Outwent the boast of winning thousand ones—
A lesson taught by you, and learn'd for life!

COLONEL BLOUNT.

How will the mood the selfsame features change!
E'en as the air will change the self-same cheek!
Now, I behold again the maid I loved,
Still love—had loved, for ever, though unfound.
Take thee? I do!—In all humility,
And thankfulness, and love, I take thee, lady!

CHARLOTTE (*advancing with her party*).

My mistress (*to* ROBERT).

ROBERT.

Yes; and there's my master! Come!
Let's steal away. Come! Stephen! Jacob!

STEPHEN *and* JACOB.

Well?

ROBERT.

To keep our titles, best we take them hence!
Nay, noble friends, tarry awhile, I pray:

JOHN.

My father, mother, and my brother, there,
And those good friends, I question not, will join
My feast in honour of our nuptials with
The Countess Lady Blanche.

CHARLOTTE (*running up to* JOHN, *and placing her hand before his mouth*).

Stop, Colonel Blount.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

I answer to that name.

CHARLOTTE.

No, sir! I mean
This gentleman.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

Brother! How were you made
A Colonel?

JOHN.

How was I made a Colonel?—by
Rapid promotion.

SIR PHILIP.

Robert, this is you.

ROBERT.

I own 'twas I that dubb'd him Colonel, sir,
But with his own good-will.

JOHN.

Wife, how is this?

CHARLOTTE.

Dear husband, pardon me,
I am not the Countess, but her lady's-maid.

JOHN.

I'll be divorced.

CHARLOTTE.

You must be married first.
You have been cheated, sir, but innocently,
At cost alone of your credulity.
Our wedding and our titles were the same,—
A play to make you wise, and pass the hour.

COLONEL BLOUNT.

John, take it in good part.

JOHN.

I will do so,
Brother, I am a man to bear a jest.
If there is one thing I am master in
Beyond another, brother, it is that.

LADY BLANCHE.

Anne!

LADY ANNE.

Blanche (*coming down*)?

LADY BLANCHE.

A man is something after all!

LADY ANNE.

Yes, with our help—I made one of Sir Philip.

LADY BLANCHE.

Nay, Anne, my eyes are open'd. We require
Men's help as well—except for Colonel Blount
I ne'er had been a woman. Much I question
If you yoursef are past improving by them.

LADY ANNE.

Oh, Blanche!

LADY BLANCHE.

Oh, Anne! the older, still the wiser.

And won't I titter when you say "obey"
Before the parson! Will you say it?

LADY ANNE.

Yes.

LADY BLANCHE.

And "love" and "honour" too?

LADY ANNE.

I will!—wont you?

LADY BLANCHE.

Devoutly, Anne, as e'er I said my prayers.
But, Anne, the pass we're come to! Don't you know?
How shall we answer to old maids for this?

LADY ANNE.

Lay heads together, and concoct a speech.
Proceed you.

LADY BLANCHE.

Nay, I never open'd school,
On which account take you precedence, Anne.
I'll help you to the first word—"Ladies!"—well?

LADY ANNE.

Ladies—I'll lay the fault upon the men (*to* BLANCHE).

LADY BLANCHE (*aside*).

They lay the fault first who are most to blame.

LADY ANNE.

But for the men, we had been still old maids.
Accept of our regrets.

LADY BLANCHE.

Nay, Anne, tell truth—
We don't regret at all! Let me go on,
I'll make a grace of our defection, Anne.—
Ladies, applaud us martyrs in the cause,

For which, contending with more zeal than heed,
We were ta'en captive by the common foe.
Profit by our example, don't despise
An enemy though slight, and if you fail
As we have done, endure it with good grace.
Believe you put on wreaths in wedlock's chains,
And turn with loving faith the links to flowers,
Of which the poorest beggars liberty.

THE END.

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WOMAN'S WIT

OR,

LOVE'S DISGUISES.

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,

AUTHOR OF "VIRGINIUS," "THE HUNCHBACK," &c.

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BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS TO THE QUEEN,
WHITEFRIARS.

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS,

This Play

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Anxious to promote, to the utmost of my humble ability, an honourable and chivalrous speculation, this play was promised to my friend, Mr. Macready, six months ago, and ought to have been ready last February. Repeated attacks of severe indisposition prevented me from completing it until my return to town, about the middle of April. If it is favourably received,—to the indefatigable and masterly superintendence, to the unstinting liberality, of the present enthusiastic and enterprising Lessee of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, it will be indebted for no inconsiderable portion of its success.

London, May 21st, 1838.

CHARACTERS.

Lord Athunree	Mr. Warde.
Sir Valentine de Grey	Mr. Anderson.
Sir William Sutton	Mr. Bartley.
Walsingham	Mr. Macready.
Bradford	Mr. Waldron.
Felton	Mr. Pritchard.
Monsieur de l'Epee	Mr. Tilbury.
Clever	Mr. Harley.
Lewson	Mr. Diddear.
Sir William Sutton's Servant	Mr. Holmes.
Sir Valentine's Servant	Mr. Collet.
Officer	Mr. C. J. Smith.
Eustace	Miss Taylor.
Hero	Miss H. Faucit.
Emily	Mrs. Serle.

WOMAN'S WIT;

OR,

Love's Disguises.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Sir William Sutton's House.—An Ante-room leading to a Ball-room.—Music as of a Ball.—Dancers seen in the further Apartment.—Visitors passing in and out.

Enter from the Ball-room, WALSINGHAM *and* BRADFORD.

WALSINGHAM.

FAIR revels these Sir William Sutton holds,
And all in honour of the city maid!
Sure the whole town is here, such swarms pass in
And out. Is it a match, as they report,
Betwixt the maid and brave Sir Valentine?

BRADFORD.

In prospect, Sir; but yet I question much,
If in a year hence, nearer than to-day.
She of the spirit of conquest is possess'd
Incontinently: victory but serves

To whet the lust of triumph. Strange so long
Lord Athunree did occupy her: but
His station ceased, soon as Sir Valentine
Aspir'd to fill his place. A grief it is,
A maid with treasure past compare like her's
Of gorgeous beauty, with a mine of wealth,
Should use her riches with such huswif'ry,
As makes one pity her possession of them!

WALSINGHAM.

Lo you, she dances, and, for partner, takes
Lord Athunree, and not Sir Valentine.
A novel measure that! know you its name?

BRADFORD.

No—ay!—a liberal measure!—See!—his hand
Doth hold possession of her waist; while her's,
Nothing repelling, on his shoulder rests,
Permitting neighbourhood so close, embrace
Were scarce in privilege a jot behind.

WALSINGHAM.

You know Lord Athunree?—his character?
The limits of my acquaintance.

BRADFORD.

No, Sir.

WALSINGHAM.

Sir,
He is a libertine. He hath been much
Abroad. That dance, I will be bound, is ware
Of his importing. Yes; a libertine!
A man of pleasure—in the animal
Ignoble sense of the term—that owns no curb
Of honour, generosity, or ruth;

Nor hath a single grace, except the nerve—
A contradiction which would make one question
That valour is of itself a thing to boast of—
To vouch the wrong he does, and stand by it!

BRADFORD.

You say this feelingly.

WALSINGHAM.

Because I feel it.
I had a friend, whose heart could scarce lodge weal
Or woe, without the privity of mine—
A friend of quick affections—and a villain
Compassed the ruin of the maid he loved.
That villain was the lord, who dances there.
They fought—thro' odds in skill, the honest arm
Was mastered by the foul; but vengeance, tho'
'Tis baffled, is not lost! Good morning, for
More than an hour or twain, 'tis past the turn
Of night.—Free thanks for your free converse with
A stranger.

BRADFORD.

Sir, the like I render you:
But will you not delay some moments more?
In spirit, yet the revels are but young!

WALSINGHAM.

Sir, I am pall'd with them—and were I not,
That lord approaches, and the sight of him
Would put out keenest zest of joyance.

BRADFORD.

Have with you, then; far as our road is one,
We'll go together.

WALSINGHAM.

Sir, right willingly! [*They go out.*

Enter LORD ATHUNREE *and* FELTON.

LORD ATHUNREE.

'Tis not for him, by sheer effrontery,
For two years I have held the foremost place
'Mongst swarms of lovers close besieging her!
Made one and all to stand aloof, whene'er
I thought they press'd too near!

FELTON.

I have marvell'd oft
At your success.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Of blood-letting, you know,
In the high mode, I have as little fear,
As need of fear; and would they come to that,
I soon convinced them, that I knew their art
Better than they did.

FELTON.

To say the truth, the foil
Has stood you much in stead, when there was need
Of weapon of graver practice.—Found you ever
Your equal in the fence?

LORD ATHUNREE.

Ay; and my master!
And therein do I tax my lucky stars,
That watch not o'er me now. He is here in the house,
That gentleman from travel late arrived,
Who, with the gloss of the fair countries which
He has been seeing, shines, and quite puts out
All light of homely worth.

FELTON.

Sir Valentine?

LORD ATHUNREE.

The same;
That knight of France, tho' son of England. Ay,
And would be captain too, to Venus, Sir!
Would take the fortress, all who'd carry which,
I at impracticable distance still
Have kept—yet come no nearer than I was
To winning it, when first set down before it.

FELTON.

Fear'st thou surrender then to him?

LORD ATHUNREE.

Humph! Fear?
That "fear" 's an ugly word! "Do I fear?" He is quick!
His point and eye do go together! Scarce
You are mark'd, you are hit! his sword is part of him,
Grows to his hand, Sir, as his hand to his wrist;
The very moment that your weapons touch,
He is here, and there, and in!—his lounge, a shot
You see not till 'tis home! We quarrell'd once,
And twice I felt him, ere a man could say
That he was well *en garde*—but touches, yet
Forerunners sure of heavier payment—so
I gave the battle up!—Yes, I do fear—
Save I have hit him, as I think I have,
Where useless lounge or parry!

FELTON.

Hit him! How?

LORD ATHUNREE.

I' the brain and heart, Sir, without damage of
The skin! Thro' the eyes, Sir, that take hit and hit

And ne'er the worse, howe'er the practice tells
Within! He is a man of sentiment!
Sentiment, mark you! that is, flesh and blood
I' the summer cool as spring—or water, Sir,
At the boiling point without a bubble—or wood
Without ignition in the heart of fire!
An ample span of forehead!—Mark!—a full
And liquid eye—free nostrils—crimson lips,
Cushioning one another without stint
Of the velvet—and a chin could show a copse
Of beard—a man, Sir, with all these, and yet
With wishes innocent as thoughts of babes!
A lie, Sir, on the face of it!—yet such
He passes for unto himself—believes
Indeed he is, and doth of others judge
But thro' the colour of this self-delusion—
Particularly women. He would have them
Earth to himself—to all else, things of Heaven!
Impassive to impression, as the air
Which man ne'er yet gave form or colour to!

FELTON.

Well?

LORD ATHUNREE.

I did dance with her just now.

FELTON.

Fair Hero?

LORD ATHUNREE.

Yes; I did dance with her a free
And liberal dance—the dance of contact, else
Forbid—abandoning to the free hand
The sacred waist! while face to face, till breath
Doth kiss with breath, and eye embraceth eye.

Your transed coil relaxing, straight'ning, round
And round in wavy measure, you entwine
Circle with circle, till the swimming brain
And panting heart in swoony lapse give o'er!

FELTON.

I know; that foreign dance thou didst bring home.

LORD ATHUNREE.

The very same; I taught it her, and first
Did dance with her to-night.

FELTON.

I had admir'd
To see you.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Had you not, I had admir'd
The card-room kept you. Give you joy—you won!
But to the dance. The evening half was out
And still he held her ear.

FELTON.

Sir Valentine?

LORD ATHUNREE.

Who else? who else that seat pre-eminent
By her fair side had held in spite of me.
I watch'd for my occasion, and it came;
Some friend did crave a moment's audience; ere
'Twas done, her waist was in my custody;
Her white arm hanging from my shoulder, where
Her hand did freely couch. "Your game goes well!"
I whisper'd her; "Play boldly, and 'tis your's:
The measure this to set the outline off!
Give sway to thy rich figure! Abandon thee
To the spirit of the dance! Let it possess thee!

Float thee as air were footing for thee! stud
Thy cheeks with smiles of fire, and give thine eye
The lightning's dazzling play! fix them on mine,
That each do feed the other's, like to tongues
With converse waking converse!"

FELTON.

Well?—I see
Thy drift!

LORD ATHUNREE.

Thou should'st have seen the issue on't—
While, like a pupil at a task he loves,
Whose aptitude with eager will outstrips
His master's bidding, she was twenty times
The thing I wished her! How she rose and sank
With springy instep, while her yielding waist—
Well as her waving neck, her beauteous head—
Did show her fair and falling shoulders off!
A world she look'd and moved of passionate
Quick sense—of loveliness and joyousness—
And I, be sure, did show its reigning lord!
Nor with the measure did dominion cease;
But when her drooping lids, relaxed steps,
Disparted lips, and colour vanishing,
Gave note she must give o'er—her languid form,
Close girdled by my arm, her hand in mine,
Her cheek for pillow on my shoulder laid,
I led her to a couch, where courtesy
Of course admitted tendance!

FELTON.

What of him?

LORD ATHUNREE.

He is mad! When he did turn, and note us first,

He looked as one who questioned his own eyes;
Then stood awhile, no doubt admiring how
Step did keep time with step, and how we mov'd
In closest neighbourhood, disparting but
To meet—her arm, a link ne'er letting go!
Then with a start of sudden fury went,
And cast him on a seat with folded arms,
And knitted brows scanning us, as he wish'd
His eyes could do the office of the lightning.
I car'd to mark no more—I saw the storm
I wish'd would come was on; and knew 't would hold!

FELTON.

And does it?

LORD ATHUNREE.

Yes; thrice she advances made—
As women know to make, and not to seem,
Except to practis'd eyes—to draw his notice:
Dropp'd her glove near him—wish'd she had a chair,
And one at his hand—complain'd of thirst, and just
A salver brought to him with wine—and all
In vain. Right in his eyes display'd her form
In attitude of tender languishment—
And to no more account than offerings
Of gems before an idol made of stone!
But see; we have danc'd out the night; and day,
With fresh and flushy vigour, cometh on;
You hear the rout breaks up. Attend him home,
Obtain his ear; know nothing, but be sure
Of slightest opportunity he gives
For her disparagement to take advantage.
Here comes the Queen of the night, and all forlorn,
As she had lost her throne!

Enter HERO, *leaning upon* EMILY.

EMILY.

What miss you, Hero,
That thus you pause and turn; go on again,
And pause and turn again? Fear'st any thing
Thou hast forgot?

HERO.

No! I have danc'd too much
To-night. The night before it was the same!
No rest—all revels!—Madness, with a frame
That is any thing but iron. [*Turns to look back.*

EMILY.

There again!
I am sure there's something you do miss—What is it?

HERO.

My spirits only! Are not your's nigh wasted?
[*Turns again.*

LORD ATHUNREE. [*Aside to* FELTON.

She waits for him—he saw her home last night.
My life on't she must look for other squire.

EMILY.

Come.

HERO.

Are they dancing yet?

EMILY.

What do you hear,
To make you ask? You're dreaming! Saw you not
That the musicians left the room before us,
And scarce a dozen laggers did remain
Besides ourselves?

HERO.

I know not what I saw,
I am tir'd—heart-tir'd—too tir'd to move or rest—
A weariness, won't let me go or stay !

LORD ATHUNREE.

He comes—accost him—ask him of the ball.

Enter SIR VALENTINE.

FELTON.

See I Sir Valentine the last of all
The revellers ?

SIR VALENTINE.

You see him, Sir ; 'tis e'en
Sir Valentine.

FELTON.

Lik'd you the ball to-night ?

SIR VALENTINE.

Yes !—No !

FELTON.

What ! Lik'd it, and dislik'd it ?

SIR VALENTINE.

Yes !

FELTON.

It was a very handsome ball.

SIR VALENTINE.

It was.

FELTON.

What was amiss, then ? Was the music bad ?

SIR VALENTINE.

The music far from bad ! Most excellent !

Incomparably good—it were in place
In a concert room,—I find no fault with the music.

FELTON.

Are you not fond of dancing, then?

SIR VALENTINE.

I am—
Innocent pastime taken innocently
In honest mood!—But there are natures, Sir,
That should eschew it—which 'tis pernicious to—
As wine, that 's mirth to some, to some is madness!
I find no fault with dancing! 'Tis an act
Sets beauty off, proportion, grace; when these
Are too set off by modesty. For men,
And women more especially, of the vein
That 's opposite, I'd have them lookers on—
For their own sakes first—next for the sake of those,
Who what they'd blush to do, do grieve to see
Enacted.

FELTON.

Was there any dance to-night
Offended you?

SIR VALENTINE.

N—o, Sir—I cannot say—
Perhaps there is no harm in any dance.
I am not sure—Some may give too much license—
Yet not so much, but e'en in such a case
By delicacy 'twill be carried off
Becomingly. I might perhaps object—
Yet where's the thing that can defy objection?
But this I say, Sir, and I'll stand to it,
That modesty being to woman more
Than beauty—for, without, is beauty cheap—

That woman, who doth shew her beauty off
Before her modesty, forgets herself,
And merits forfeit of that high respect,
Which noble minds would bear her!

HERO. [*To* EMILY.

What lady, can you tell me, danc'd to night
As lady should not dance?

EMILY.

I do not know.

HERO. [*To* FELTON.

Do you, Sir?

FELTON.

No!

HERO. [*To* LORD ATHUNREE.

My Lord, do you?

LORD ATHUNREE.

No, Lady.

HERO.

Perhaps some lady, whom the gentleman
Himself did dance with, and some other noted—

SIR VALENTINE.

No lady, Madam, that did dance with me.
Who yields to me her hand shall ne'er forget
Herself—at least by my o'erstepping. She
Shall find I know the honor that she does me;
See in the freedom of the frolic measure
My reverence for her sex attending her;
And then be handed to her seat again,
For mine own credit sake if not for her's,
By all approv'd, as gracefully come off

In partnery of honest joyance!
No lady, Madam, that did dance with me.

LORD ATHUNREE.

The plague repay him for the lesson he
So freely reads me—in her presence too!

HERO.

Wilt please you name the lady gave offence?

SIR VALENTINE.

'Twere a presumptuous act for my poor tongue.
But if you know her, you must know her beauty,
Wherein I ne'er met fair to liken to her,
And that more fittingly shall name her for me.
A noble stature, stopping there, where sex
Would have it reach, and bid it go no farther;
A head of antique mould, magnificent
As may consist with softness and with sweetness;
Features, advertisement of thoughts and moods,
Wishes and fancies, such as it beseems
To lodge with chastity and tenderness
In sumptuous palace of rich loveliness;
And limbs of mould and act therewith consorting,
Making a paragon of symmetry!—
Gods, to such homeliness of use perverted,
As properties, to them were homeliness,
Should spurn to be applied to!

EMILY.

Are you ill,
That you turn pale?

HERO.

Ill!—What should make me ill?
I could be angry, were it worth my while,

At such disparagement of one, it seems
Is known to me,—but calumny is a thing
Defeats itself, and I should be despis'd
Did I pay heed to!

SIR VALENTINE.

Lady, you are right;
It shall be calumny—it should be so!
Vouchers so fair, should never be forsworn.
Alas for him, who is incredulous,
Yet would believe them rather far than doubt them!

[SIR VALENTINE *goes out, followed by* FELTON.

HERO.

A most strange gentleman!—an oddity!
I took him for a man of sense,—didn't you?
A fanciful and churlish gentleman!
Looks sour because another man looks pleased!
Lord Athunreee, wilt see my carriage brought
Close to the door before I venture out,
If not to tax your gallantry too much?

LORD ATHUNREE.

I fly to do it. [*Goes out.*

HERO.

Let me weep a moment
Upon your neck —There! I am better now.
Are my eyes red?

EMILY.

Not much.

HERO.

I will appear
To have been laughing! Laughter bringeth tears.
Most excellent!—you should have kept it tho'

For another time! I have not strength to laugh!
As 'tis, I am so weak, I laugh and cry.

Re-enter ATHUNREE.

Lord Athunree, your courtesy has lost you
A most facetious story!

LORD ATHUNREE.

Tell it me.

HERO.

Tell it you! Tell it! I am dead already
With hearing it, and must not hear't again,
Would I go home to-night! A little plague,
To make me laugh, and know that I should cry,
For lack of very strength.—Come, let us go!
A charming ball! Fair night—most happy night!
I'll find a time to make *you* cry with laughing. [*To* EMILY.
A charming night—a very charming night!

[*They go out.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Room in the House of MONSIEUR DE L'EPEE.

Enter, from an inner Room, WALSINGHAM *and* MONSIEUR DE L'EPEE.

DE L'EPEE.

Your progress answers to your practice, Sir;
Cause have you none for discontent. Confess,
You play the foil with twice the ease you did
A month ago. Might I be credited,
Not only each new week, but even day,
Puts to the blush the former one, so fast
You catch the mystery of the fair art.

WALSINGHAM.

Yes; but my fellow-pupil heads me still.

DE L'EPEE.

His quickness is your master.

WALSINGHAM.

Yet, 'tis strange!
With all my pains, I toil behind him still,
And he a very stripling!

DE L'EPEE.

'Tis not strength
That makes the odds, but art. To turn the foil
In practis'd hand, almost a wheaten straw
Hath stamina enough. The point deceived,
An infant's arm in distance lounges home;
The art is strength, and length, and every thing.

WALSINGHAM.

To say the truth, it is a noble art,
On which agility and grace attend,
With proper manhood keeping company,
As on none other;—making lightest ease
To champion force, and, as you say, bear off
The palm from it. In every act and state—
Salute, guard, parry, feint or pass—it hath
A bearing worthy of the eyes of kings
And their high consorts, when a practis'd hand
Like your's takes up the foil.

DE L'EPEE.

You flatter, Sir!

WALSINGHAM.

By my proud honour, no! But, to your pupil—
What is he?

DE L'EPEE.

I know not.

WALSINGHAM.

He is very young.

DE L'EPEE.

Yes; by his looks he has a teen or twain
To count;—tho' never scholar study plied

With manlier resolve and constancy.
It often moves my wonder, that so slight
And delicate a frame should undergo
What to robuster mould a thousand times
I have mark'd was weariness. Scarce lays he down
The foil, before he takes it up again,
Some parry, feint or lounge, unmastered yet,
To practise;—which he does with zest so keen,
I have thought, at times, that in his fancy's eye
There stood before his point an enemy,
The actor of some unatoned wrong,
Whose heart each thrust was meant for.—A good morning!
I am waited for.

WALSINGHAM.

Good morning to you, Sir. [DE L'EPEE *goes out.*
A noble fellow that!—a soldier who
A mighty captain followed, for the strides
With which he led to glory—nay, for them
Deserted not, when fortune back'd a world,
Marshall'd against her off-cast favourite!
Talk you of scars?—that Frenchman bears on crown,
Body and limb, his vouchers palpable,
For many a thicket he has struggled thro'
Of briery danger—wondering that he
Came off with even life, when right and left
His mates dropp'd thick beside him. A true man!
His rations with his master gone—for he
Was honour's soldier, that ne'er changes sides—
He left his country for a foreign one,
To teach his gallant art, and earn a home.
I know him to be honest, generous,

High-soul'd, and modest; every way a grace
To the fine, martial nation, whence he sprang!*

EUSTACE *enters from Inner Room.*

My fellow-pupil! (*Aside*). That was a shrewd guess
The Frenchman made. Are all these pains to pay
An enemy?—then is his case my own.
Would I could gain his confidence! but still,
Oft as I try he foils me with reserve
He shows to none beside! One more attempt.—
So, fellow-pupil! You have given o'er at last.
Right well you fenc'd to-day! you are weary?

EUSTACE.

No. Good morning, Sir.

WALSINGHAM.

I' faith, you "Sir" not me:
We have been mates too long, methinks, for term
So niggard, fellow-pupil!—Walsingham
Is my name. I prithee, when thou next accost'st me,
Say, Walsingham. Is't not enough, your foil
Keeps me at distance—will not let me in—
Rebukes me, shames me—will you with your tongue
O'erbear me too? Call me not "Sir," I pray,
But Walsingham.

EUSTACE.

It were to make too free
For mere acquaintanceship.

* This is a portrait. My brothers of Glasgow know and honour the gallant man who suggested it, and will judge how far it is a faithful one. At all events it is not flattered.

WALSINGHAM.

Acquaintanceship!
You have known me for a year. Friendship hath grown
In half that time.

EUSTACE.

Friendship grows not by time.

WALSINGHAM.

In sooth 'twould seem so. Daily have we met
For good a year—nor yet have shaken hands.
Give me thy hand, and let us hence be friends!
What! will you not? I'faith, you should—you shall!
I'll take it spite of you—yea, tho' you frown,
And call yourself my foe, which would be hard
To make a foe, striving to make a friend.

EUSTACE (*after a pause*).

I'll shake hands with you.

WALSINGHAM.

Ha!—a hearty grasp!
But take it not away so soon again,
Nor where you give your hand, refuse your eye.
Why don't you look at me?

EUSTACE.

Let go my hand!

WALSINGHAM.

Such haste to take away—so frank to give?

EUSTACE.

Let go my hand!—Well, you may keep it, Sir;
You cannot make it like its prison, nor,
When once 'tis free from't, enter it again.

WALSINGHAM.

Well—call me Walsingham, I'll let it go.
Why must I force you thus to be my friend?

EUSTACE.

Why should you? Force made never yet a friend.

WALSINGHAM.

For kindness, then! why would you hold me off?
A man repelled of Fortune! See you not,
I am not of the vein of those on whom
Her smiles she lavishes—nor do I think
With surfeit of such sweet you bought that cast
Of thoughtfulness, which, when I look upon you,
Like to my glass, shows me, methinks, myself!—
I am a man of honour and of heart.
Ah, too much heart! Come, call me Walsingham,
And then I'll let you go.

EUSTACE.

Well—Walsingham!

WALSINGHAM.

I' faith, most kindly did you sound my name;
Tongue never fell it yet more sweetly from,
Save one!—Save one!

EUSTACE.

Farewell

WALSINGHAM.

We'll walk together.

EUSTACE.

Nay.

WALSINGHAM.

Will you have it so? why have it so;

My love is not that sturdy beggar yet,
But spurning may suffice to stop its craving!
Yet ere you leave me, hear me—and then go.
Methinks our fates in something are alike;
To prove it so, or not, I'll tell thee mine.
Give thee my confidence—make thee indeed my friend!
Now, once for all, what say you?

EUSTACE.

Be it so.

WALSINGHAM.

Thy hand again, then!—Do we go together?

EUSTACE.

We do!—Have with you!

WALSINGHAM.

Now we are friends for ever! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.

A Room in HERO'S *Town House.*

Enter SIR WILLIAM *and* EMILY.

SIR WILLIAM.

At sea again! Blown ever from the port
We'd have her harbour in, by her wild fancies,
And far from land as ever! I did hope
This suitor had been anchorage had held her.

EMILY.

And so did I; she'll ne'er be held by suitor,

Long as there bows another—save it be
By a miracle. I say it, tho' I love her.

SIR WILLIAM.

And yet that lord hath held her.

EMILY.

So he hath,
By dint of mere audacity—some art
He owns makes other suitors quail, and she,
For vanity, hath still affected him,
As proud to have a vassal in a man
To whom his fellows bow.

SIR WILLIAM.

I am glad so slight
His power. I know him for a profligate,
With broken coffers, to replenish which
He merely follows her.

EMILY.

His practice 'twas
Which to this issue led—on some account
I know not—nay, nor guess. He durst not treat
Sir Valentine with overbearing mien,
So took advantage of fair Hero's weakness,
To play upon't, expose, and with disgust
Surfeit the man he fear'd.

SIR WILLIAM.

And he succeeded?

EMILY.

Ay, to the full, Sir, as I have possess'd you.

SIR WILLIAM.

I am sorry for it. He had begun to love her,
And would have made to her a worthy husband;

Safe guardian to her wealth; and one to make
A proud wife of a higher dame than she!
It crossly hath fallen out. But she is piqued,
You say, at his desertion?

EMILY.

Much, Sir!—Much!
She wept, as I acquainted you.

SIR WILLIAM.

You did,
And matter see I there. Unfeigned tears—
And such were her's—from deep-laid fountains flow,
Abiding in the heart! The argument
Which draws them thence, as deep must even go
A curling lip I had not heeded—that
Were simple scorn—but they who weep for scorn
Do weep for something more. Sir Valentine
Hath not his peer in England! Trust me, girl,
She 's not so blind with folly, as not to see
His paramount desert.—Where is she?

EMILY.

Lock'd
In her chamber with her milliner,—so says
Her maid. These three hours have I crav'd admission,
But all in vain; she has not yet press'd pillow
Sufficient to repair her spirits from
The waste of yesternight.

SIR WILLIAM.

A wayward girl!
New dresses, pleasures, lovers—all things new,
Except herself. Would that would change as well!

Some mode she studies with her minister
Of novelty, will flog all former folly. [*Knocking.*
What sober knock is that?—Such seldom calls
At her fantastic door. Who knocks?

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

A man,
Of formal habit and consorting speech,
Usher to one most young and fair; a maid
Who seems to know no use for beauty, but
To mortify it with ungainly guise.
She asks to see the mistress of the house.

SIR WILLIAM.

Admit her!—On what errand can she come?

[*Servant goes out, and returns, shewing in* CLEVER, *followed by* HERO, *both disguised as Quakers.*

Who art thou?

CLEVER.

Man unto Ruth Mapleson,
Who with the woman of the house would speak.

SIR WILLIAM.

The woman of the house!

EMILY.

Ruth Mapleson!

HERO.

Friend, am I right? This house of vanity,
Is't the abode of that unfortunate
They call the city maid? who to the use
Of one, perverts what Heaven did lavishly
Commit unto her, for the good of many!
Is this her house?—and if it is, I pray you

Acquaint her that a sister, pitying
Her hapless state of blindness, ignorance,
Omission and offence, hath come to her
To clear her vision, to inform her mind,
To teach her occupation, and from evil
To turn her steps aside.—Umph !

CLEVER.

Umph !

SIR WILLIAM.

My breath
Is almost stopp'd with wonder !

EMILY.

So is mine.
What can it mean ?

SIR WILLIAM.

Some poor fanatic 'tis,
Whose zeal hath warp'd her reason.

HERO.

Sinful man !
Thus is it with the children of the flesh ;
What argues wisdom they misconstrue madness !
Tho' through perverseness rather than conviction.
Tremble !—Look down !—Abase thee to the dust !
Should'st thou not blush at thy grey hairs, the vouchers
For thriftless years, for profitless experience !
'Tis winter with thee—harvest-time is past—
What hast thou garner'd ? Chaff instead of grain !
What doest thou with gauds like these, thy trappings ?
Why standest thou beneath this roof of pride,
That shouldst be thinking of the charnel-house
And the attire of its inhabitant ?
I know thee uncle to that maid of lightness,

That mistress of this house of emptiness,
And whom I come to chasten and to teach!
Umph!

CLEVER.

Umph!

EMILY.

Dear Sir! who is't? I grow uneasy!
With strangeness yet familiarity
She strikes me, that consist not! I do feel
As though an apparition stood before me,
And wish she were away!

SIR WILLIAM.

And so do I!

HERO (*to Emily*).

And thou, poor flesh and blood!—illusion! heirdom
O' the worm! that think'st thyself all soundness, yet
Art all corruption! Why abid'st thou in
The lazar-house? Depart from it! Pull off
Its dress, and don the clean and wholesome guise
Of plainness and humility—Umph!

CLEVER.

Umph!

SIR WILLIAM.

This bold intrusion and address—

HERO.

Peace, Satan!
And yet, perhaps I wrong you! Privily
You may condemn proud Hero's fantasies?

SIR WILLIAM.

I do.

EMILY.

And so do I.

HERO.

O do you so?
Then are ye not, as I did reckon you,
O' the children of the Prince of Darkness?

SIR WILLIAM *and* EMILY.

No.

HERO.

You see that she is very vain?

EMILY.

We else were blind.

SIR WILLIAM.

Stone blind!

HERO.

Capricious?

EMILY.

As many moods as there's hours in the day.

SIR WILLIAM.

Say minutes, rather!

HERO.

Fond of pleasure?

EMILY.

Her constant occupation.

SIR WILLIAM.

'Tis her meat
And drink; rest, business, studies, prayers, and sleep!

HERO.

She hath no constancy in aught—
Lovers especially?

EMILY.

She changes them
Too often.

SIR WILLIAM.

She doth use them as her dresses!
Shew her a new one, she casts off the last,
How new soe'er put on.

HERO.

I pity her.

EMILY.

She scarce deserves it.

SIR WILLIAM.

Pity is too good
For such a piece of waywardness, perverseness,
Pride, folly, fantasy, and emptiness!

HERO.

So then we are all of the same mind?

EMILY.

Exactly.

SIR WILLIAM.

Not a pin's point difference!

HERO.

You would approve that I reform her then?

EMILY.

Reform her! could you do so? Do so.

SIR WILLIAM.

Do!
Do! Make her anything but what she is.

EMILY.

Change cannot fail to better her.

SIR WILLIAM.

No change
Can make her worse!—Reform her, pray!

HERO.

I will.

SIR WILLIAM *and* EMILY.

When ?

HERO.

When you take her for another thing
And find her just the same !—Oh, uncle, fie !
Fie, Emily ! is this your loyalty ?

SIR WILLIAM.

What means this metamorphosis?

HERO.

Defence
Of my sex's rights—assertion of my own !
Instruction to that master-work, call'd man !
Protest and re-establishment of due
Prerogative ! reduction of rebellion,
Compell'd from reared crest to bended knee !
Pains, penalties, bonds, confiscations, deaths,
To follow thereupon !

SIR WILLIAM.

Why, niece, what wind
Doth bring this sudden storm ?

HERO.

Are you a man ?

SIR WILLIAM.

I trust I am !

HERO.

Then if you are, you know
The privileges of a single woman.
We have few, Heav'n help us ! when we change the state
Most rightly dubb'd of single blessedness !
Is 't not a single woman's right to rule ?

SIR WILLIAM.

It is.

HERO.

To have her will her law?

SIR WILLIAM.

It is.

HERO.

To have as many tastes, moods, fits, as she likes?

SIR WILLIAM.

It is.

HERO.

To come, to go, to smile, to frown,
To please, to pain, to love, to hate, do aught
Without dispute?

SIR WILLIAM.

It is.

HERO.

Is't not enough,
You have leave to look upon her—listen to her—
Stand in her presence—wait upon her? Must
Her 'haviour, speech, be what you like, or what
It likes her sovereign self that they should be?

SIR WILLIAM.

What likes her sovereign self!

HERO.

You *are* a man!
Would all your sex were like you! Who are not,
Are not for me, believe me! Look you, uncle!
I'll make the saucy traitor feel my power,
Or I will break my heart! He thinks me fair—
I thank him! Well-proportioned—very much
Beholden to him! Dignified and graceful—

A man of shrewd perception! very!—send him
On expedition of discovery!

SIR WILLIAM.

Whom mean you, Hero?

HERO.

Whom?—Sir Valentine!
He has made his bow! Indeed, a gracious one—
A stately, courtly, condescending one!
Ne'er may I courtsey, if he bow not lower!
I'll bring him to his knees as a spoiled child
With uplift hands that asketh pardon, then
Command him up, and never see me more!

SIR WILLIAM.

Why, how hath this befallen?

HERO.

I did not dance
To please him! No, Sir! He is a connoisseur
In dancing!—hath a notion of his own
Of a step! In carriage, attitude, has taste,
Dainty as palate of an epicure,
Which, if you hit not to a hair, disgust
Doth take the place of zest! He is sick of me!
My feet the frolic measure may indulge,
But not my heart—mine eye, my cheek, my lip,
Must not be cognizant of what I do—
As wood and marble could be brought to dance,
And look like wood and marble! I shall teach him
Another style! Come! I have found you out;
Will you compound for your sedition,
And help me? Come! how say you, little traitress?

EMILY.

Content.

HERO.

And you, most reverend rebellion?

SIR WILLIAM.

Command me aught, that I can do in reason.

HERO.

Can do in reason! In what reason? There
Are fifty kinds of reason! There 's a fool's reason,
And a wise man's reason, and a knave's reason, and
An honest man's reason, and an infant's reason,
And reason of a grandfather—but there's
A reason 'bove them all, and that alone
Can stand me now in stead—a woman's reason!
Wilt thou be subject unto me in that?

SIR WILLIAM.

I will.
But tell me whence this speech of solemn phrase?

HERO.

From one I knew and lov'd at school—a girl
Half, by the sect that practise it, brought up.
But she of thought and will therewith consorting,
The mistress likewise was—most veritable.
Her name was Helen Mowbray—by the arts
Of that same lord to whom I owe the coil
I would unwind me from, and whom, thro' whim,
Not liking, I have countenanc'd. 'Tis said
She fell—but not in my belief. How is this?
I am growing serious! You will help me?

SIR WILLIAM.

Yes.

HERO.

That's my good Uncle! That's a darling Uncle!
There ne'er was kinder, nor more sensible!

A good, dear, wise, obedient, docile Uncle !
Give me a kiss ! Hence, Master Clever ! Do
What I directed you—Sir Valentine
Is not yet out. Invite him where I told you—
To the house at Greenwich. [*Exit* CLEVER.

SIR WILLIAM.

What dost thou intend ?

HERO.

Order the carriage—no ; it must be one
They lend for hire :—and come along with me—
I'll tell you on the way. Emily !—Uncle !
Look you ! (*throws her glove down*) I'll have him, as my glove
that there,
At my feet doth lie, till I do pick him up !
And I will pick him up—but in a way !
There !—give it me again—O, you dear Uncle,
To help my plot !—do, what I wish !—You ought
To be an Uncle ! There 's another kiss !
And if I do not make him kiss the rod,
I'm ne'er a niece deserving such an Uncle !
Come ! come !—I did not dance to please him ! Come.

[*They go out.*

SCENE III.

SIR VALENTINE'S *House.*

Enter SIR VALENTINE.

SIR VALENTINE.

Oh, pitiable case! so rich a stamp,
And yet the metal base! For what high things
Did nature fashion her!—whose rich intent
Had she but half fulfill'd, no wealth, no state
That earth can furnish, for aggrandizement
Of craving and insatiate ambition,
Conferr'd on her, had given her half her due,
Far less its debtor made her! Misery!
To find the good we hop'd, the bane we hate!
Hate!—O, perverse and doubtful course of love,
That in the goal it pants for, finds its grave!
That reaches for a bliss, and clasps a pang!
That now doth own a mine, and naught anon!
O beggary most poor, that from the lapse
Of dwindled riches grows!

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

You are wanted, Sir—

SIR VALENTINE.

Who wants me?

SERVANT.

One who brings an errand from
Sir William Sutton, and craves speech with you.

SIR VALENTINE.

Admit him. [SERVANT *goes out.*—*Enter* CLEVER.
Well?

CLEVER.

Are you the man they call
Sir Valentine de Grey?

SIR VALENTINE.

That man am I.

CLEVER.

Then, being he, another man they call
Sir William Sutton, sends me here to pray
Thy company this afternoon, to meet
Some friends who dine with him at Greenwich.

SIR VALENTINE.

Say,
I cannot come.

CLEVER.

Art thou engaged, friend?

SIR VALENTINE.

No.

CLEVER.

Then thou speak'st not true. Thou can'st come.

SIR VALENTINE.

Say,
I will not come.

CLEVER.

He bade me say to thee
Thou *must* come.

SIR VALENTINE.

Must come?

CLEVER.

Yes; so come along.
For he did charge me bring thee, and I said
I would; and not to bring thee, were to break
My word, and make him angry.

SIR VALENTINE.

Tell him, then,
I was not in.

CLEVER.

I will not tell a lie.

SIR VALENTINE.

Art thou his servant?

CLEVER.

No; but man to one
That's niece unto him—that is, in the flesh—
Not in the spirit.

SIR VALENTINE.

Wherefore?

CLEVER.

Know'st thou him,
And know'st thou not he is a man of sin?
Ruth Mapleson is of the faithful!

SIR VALENTINE.

Who?

CLEVER.

Ruth Mapleson.

SIR VALENTINE.

I know no niece he hath,
Save one—fair Mistress Sutton.

CLEVER.

Name her not—
Daughter of darkness.

SIR VALENTINE.

Liar !

CLEVER.

Thou dost lie
To call me so.

SIR VALENTINE.

Wretch !

CLEVER.

Thou dost lie again.
I am a godly and a happy man,
That waits upon Ruth Mapleson ; the niece
Of him they call Sir William Sutton ; and
Cousin to Hero Sutton, whom in naught
Doth Ruth resemble save her face and form,
Where she might pass for her, she is so like her.

SIR VALENTINE.

So like her ! said'st thou, like her ?

CLEVER.

Thou didst hear
I did ; so like her, 'twere a cunning eye
Could tell the one from the other. That's my hand ;
I take 't away, and show it thee again :
Is that another hand ?

SIR VALENTINE.

Knave, 'tis the same.

CLEVER.

Miscall me not, friend ! Knave is not my name,
But Obadiah. Use me civilly,
That do instruct thee, who art ignorant.
Not more in likeness is that hand the same,
Than Hero Sutton is Ruth Mapleson
In feature, figure, face, complexion, all

That makes the outward woman—but within,
Winter and summer are not less akin!

SIR VALENTINE.

How, knave?

CLEVER.

I told thee not to call me "knave;"
My name is Obadiah.

SIR VALENTINE.

Obadiah
I'll call thee then. How are these cousins as
Unlike as winter is to summer?

CLEVER.

Thus.—Is winter barren? so is the maiden Hero; is it made up of fogs and rain? so is the maiden Hero of vapours and the spleen; hath it much cloud, and little sun? so hath the maiden Hero great discontent, small content; hath it long night, and brief day? so hath the maiden Hero lasting displeasure, short favour; is there any depending upon it? no more is there upon the maiden Hero; do you wish it heartily away? so would you be rid of the maiden Hero.

SIR VALENTINE.

I fear thou art a slanderer.

CLEVER.

I see
Thou lack'st good manners, which is grievous, friend,
In one of thy degree. Thou callest names
As scavengers that quarrel in the streets
Most unbecomingly!

SIR VALENTINE.

Well; now proceed.
What of her cousin?

CLEVER.

Tho' a godly man,
Yet am I flesh and blood, and thou dost vex
My spirit, friend, by so misusing me.
I tell thee once again, my name is not
Liar, nor knave, nor slanderer, nor aught
But Obadiah.

SIR VALENTINE.

Well—enough of that;
Her cousin? Come! Her cousin?

CLEVER.

Tho' I am
A man of peace, I am a valiant man.
I combat not, but yet the elements
Of war are given me, friend! I am full of them,
Save what is in me of the goodly thing
That mortifies the flesh, and keeps them in
Subjection! Yea, I am a warlike man!
Yea, verily, a very warlike man!

SIR VALENTINE.

I ask thy pardon.

CLEVER.

I do grant it thee;
Thou dost a proper thing; and now shalt hear,
Wherein the maiden Ruth, who, outwardly,
Is to the maiden Hero what that maiden
Is to herself, is, inwardly, reverse
As summer is to winter.

SIR VALENTINE.

Prithee on!

CLEVER.

Is summer fertile? is summer clear? hath it little cloud, much sun, long day and short night—and that more like day, than night? is summer constant, and do you wish it never away? so is the maiden Ruth bounteous; so is the maiden Ruth cheerful; so hath she twenty smiles for one frown; lasting favour, brief displeasure, which you would almost take to be favour: so is she little liable to change; so would you wish to have her ever with you!

SIR VALENTINE.

Where dwells this cousin?

CLEVER.

In Greenwich, friend, whither thou goest; not in the same house with him that sends for thee—for light dwelleth not with darkness—but in another habitation, where her books, and her flowers, and her own sweet thoughts, which are fairer and wiser than either, are her only companions.

SIR VALENTINE.

I'll go with thee to Greenwich. Lead on!

CLEVER.

Hold, friend!—You must do all things soberly.

[*They go out*, CLEVER *preceding, with extreme gravity.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Outskirts of London.

Enter EUSTACE *and* WALSINGHAM.

EUSTACE.

Now for the confidence you promised me.

WALSINGHAM.

Can'st thou not guess my story? Look at me!
Seem my years more than his you'd reckon in
Life's outset, when beneath our feet all 's flowers,
Above our heads all sun? Can'st not divine
What could alone o'ercast and wither thus?
Nor only take away the adjuncts sweet
Of that fair prime of hope, but prospect leave
Of nought but cloud and barrenness?

EUSTACE.

Ambition?

WALSINGHAM.

No; that 's an after-game. There 's one we play
Before, o'er which the heart doth throb, as o'er
None other! where we throw the die, whose turn
Nine times in ten 's the oracle foretells
All chance to come! which, if we play in earnest—

And light are they, who of that game make light—
We make ourselves for ever, or lose all,
Doubling the value of our being, or
Reducing it to naught!—a game, methinks,
Which you have play'd at—Love.—Am I not right?

EUSTACE.

You are.

WALSINGHAM.

You didn't win?

EUSTACE (*hesitatingly*).

I—didn't.

WALSINGHAM.

How?
You speak as one that yet did neither lose—
Whose game not yet was out—a chance, altho'
With heavy odds against him. Mark me; if
Thou hast rivals whom she entertains like thee,
With just so much of hope as doth suffice
To keep them suitors still, while each can say,
She 's mine, as well as t'other—give her up!
Away with her! Abandon her for ever!
Thou woo'st, what, if thou win'st—the tongue is kind—
Not that doth give thee joy—but wish thee dead!
The keeper, not the owner, of a thing
Wherein is lock'd thy life, and thy life's gems—
Thy peace and honor dear!

EUSTACE.

Won such a maid
Thy love?

WALSINGHAM.

Not such a maid! No; she did live
Forbid to all but me. The statue's ear
And eye, you'd think, as much perception had
Of wonder at the consummate chisel's skill,
As her's of praise from others' eyes and tongues.
But, oh! at lightest glance or sound of mine,
How would the rich and fair-wrought marble glow!

EUSTACE.

Thou mourn'st her dead, then?

WALSINGHAM.

Dead?—Ay, dead! a corpse,
A mouldering corpse, that's with corruption hous'd,
Which skill medicinal can ne'er restore
To its sweet life again!—the which to weep
Is all that fondest eyes may look for now.
The life, alas! of her fair honor's gone!

EUSTACE.

What! liv'd she but for thee, and gave she up
Her richest jewel to another?

WALSINGHAM.

You
Shall hear my story. What in form she was,
I will not paint to you.—Each lover has,
You know, the fairest she—say, mine 's a paragon
As much as thine—nay, of the very charm
That 's crest of all, thou wilt but make a seat
To mount some plume of her's, whom thou affect'st,
That shall transcend it far! I know it—so
Forbear. Yet had you e'er set eyes upon her!

Oh! she did stand alone! To truest hearts
The sight of her was wonderful estrangement,
Weaning them for a time from things, howe'er
Clung dotingly to before—that mistresses
Have sadden'd to see eyes, that blaz'd on them
Ere they were turn'd away, turn back again
Listless and icy cold! Riches and rank,
Bestudded o'er and gilded, have look'd blank
To see themselves outshone without a gem!
Nay, very hostesses, whose only care
Was to behold their costly huswifry
Approv'd, have been discomfited to see
Their tables crown'd as ne'er they were before,
And she the only garnish of the board!

EUSTACE.

Thought you not others' eyes did see like yours?

WALSINGHAM.

No! no! I saw they did—I felt they did—
Felt it thro' many a pang of doubt—but not
Thro' fear of her demerits, but my own!

EUSTACE.

Ne'er gave she cause to doubt?

WALSINGHAM.

No!

EUSTACE.

Still she fail'd?

WALSINGHAM.

As life—when health, that is the heart of life,
Seems sound to the very core! has ne'er given sign
Of flaw or speck—this moment in the bloom—
The next, is blasted!

EUSTACE.

What you do assert,
The more you do assert, the more I doubt!
What! truth to falsehood in a moment turn?
Virtue to vice? Love to estrangement? Love!
And in a woman! Had she lov'd before?

WALSINGHAM.

No!

EUSTACE.

Her first love, too! But she was a child?

WALSINGHAM.

No; in the blush of bursting womanhood.

EUSTACE.

And left thee for another? No declining
Of that first passion? Never seen to wan
A little now—now more? but all at once
Go out! Impossible! You've been deceiv'd!
Abus'd! you have! my life, my soul upon it!

WALSINGHAM.

They're costly pledges to be forfeited;
Then risk them not!

EUSTACE.

What can'st thou set against them?

WALSINGHAM.

Proofs! facts!

EUSTACE.

Facts?

WALSINGHAM.

Facts! *My* cause thou wast engag'd in?
How is't I find thee in another's listed?

EUSTACE.

What is the cause of her thou lov'st, but thine?

WALSINGHAM.

Not if she's false.

EUSTACE.

But if she's true?

WALSINGHAM.

She 's not!
By truth, she 's not!

EUSTACE.

By truth, she *is!*—unless,
Things, that do coincide much as the East
And West—high Heaven and the Abyss—noonday
And midnight—reason and madness—contraries
Confess'd and palpable—for so oppos'd,
I own, do your averments seem to me—
You prove are in accordance.

WALSINGHAM.

Listen, then!
Who wins a prize, thou know'st wins envy too.
With such a prize thou wilt not wonder then
That many grudg'd my fortune! 'Mong the rest
Was one—a satire on the saucy code
That makes the wreath of merit birth-right, when
No law can make the grace that wins it so.
This titled profligate alone, no check,
Reserve, rebuke, rejection, could divert
From pressing still his suit: my arm had tried it,
But that she hung upon it, minding me
The life I'd peril was the heart of her's!
She did!—and for enforcement show'd to me

Vouchers on vouchers—genuine sighs and tears!
Art couldn't feign such—I'll do justice to her—
She then was true—as true as haggard since!
Why weep'st thou?

EUSTACE.

Thou dost weep; and tears draw tears,
When grief itself doth fail.

WALSINGHAM.

Then dry your eyes;
You'll ne'er see mine again! you think me lost
To honour?

EUSTACE.

No!

WALSINGHAM.

What not to weep a wanton?

EUSTACE.

O, not a wanton!

WALSINGHAM.

How!

EUSTACE.

Not *then* a wanton!

WALSINGHAM.

Not then! The devil was once an angel—what
Of that? He fell!—who weeps him? no one! What
Tho' she was once a spirit of light, as he was,
When now she's black as he?

EUSTACE.

Nay!

WALSINGHAM.

Doubt it not!
To cavil at the right we feel to writhe
Is aggravation, that adds wrong to wrong,
And drives before-o'erburthen'd patience mad!
The sun did stare upon it!—'twas not lewdness
Chamber'd—behind the curtain—'twas i'the street,
Light as noonday could make it!—without cloak!
Hood! veil!—Now call it questionable! Nothing
To mask the wanton!—Oh! for a thunderbolt,
To strike me then!—From a noted, libell'd stew,
Led by the noble libertine—his trophy,
Worn on his arm in the gaze of every eye—
I saw her issue.

EUSTACE.

Did she shun thee?

WALSINGHAM.

No!

EUSTACE.

That was a proof of innocence.

WALSINGHAM.

Of guilt!
Rank! rank!—a sudden and entire infection,
A touch and rottenness! as from the bite
Of a serpent, in an instant ruddy life
To black corruption grows! Why should she shun me?
She had her tale at hand! 'Twas but to make
Her paramour her friend; their assignation,
A freak of chance; her reconcilement to
A man she loath'd before, a debt; and for
That debt assign a cause equivalent;—

All which she did in a breath! 'Twas clear, Sir; clear!
The truth spoke for itself! Fact born of fact—
Nought out of place or disproportionate!
As obviously that follow'd this; this that;
As this doth chime with this, and that with that!
A thing one must believe! From end to end,
A lie, Sir!—He had sav'd her from a villain!
The villain! When appeal'd to, he did damn her!
" He fain would bear her out! His life was her's!—
" His fortune—but upon a point of honour—
" In question with a man of honour—not
" That he denied her fair averments tho'—
" He pray'd she would excuse him!"

EUSTACE.

You believ'd him!
Him you believ'd, that ne'er was true before!
Her disbelievd, was ne'er before but true?

WALSINGHAM.

She did admit it.

EUSTACE.

How?

WALSINGHAM.

By damning silence!

EUSTACE.

Is't guilt alone, convicted, that keeps silence?
Guilt—saucy guilt—that dares to break the law
Of God and man! Remember you no case,
Where innocence accus'd hath all at once
Been stricken dumb?—appall'd to undergo
The charge of sin, that never could endure
The thought of sin? Appearances against her,

And witness for her none, but her own heart?
Her very blood betraying her, deserting
Its post upon her cheek, whence, were it bold
As honest, 'fore a host 'twould ne'er give way!
Remember you no case like this? or if
Your memory none records, is such a one
So much at odds with probability,
Your fancy cannot image it? A woman,
Young, charily brought up, as vestal for
The fane! Suppose a novice so sincere,
She lov'd and knew it not, till, by its signs,
Others more skill'd did find the passion out,
And tell her that she loved!

WALSINGHAM.

Thou draw'st herself!

EUSTACE.

And such a one, by accident or plot,
Sudden to stand in such predicament
As of her honour valid question founds—
In presence too of him whose value for
The gem doth make it doubly, trebly, dear—
And then, appealing to a villain's truth,
To find the tongue, should clear, but blurr'd her more!—
Oh! I would ask for signs of life as soon
From lips of stone, as look for words from her's!
She couldn't speak! Speak? breathe! she would be stunn'd
To utter lapse of every sense, except
That at her heart, which told it at that time
It would be bliss to break! Should she be true
At last—

WALSINGHAM.

No more of this!

EUSTACE.

Have I not shaken—
Not much, but somewhat—say, a little—say,
A very little—your belief of her
Dishonour?

WALSINGHAM.

Speak not of her.

EUSTACE.

If she is pure,
Despite appearances, as first you thought her;
Constant, despite desertion; and despite
Wrongs, scornings, brandings, fond;—it may be fonder—
For woman's love's a plant, I've often heard,
Which mocketh all that thrive in winter time,
Not only keeping green, but growing then.

WALSINGHAM.

You take, methinks, strange interest in her fate!

EUSTACE.

I have a friend, whose fate resembles her's—
Whose cause I'm sworn to right! Besides, we're friends.
Thou art not happy?

WALSINGHAM.

No.

EUSTACE.

I'd see thee so.
To have thee so, I'd wish thee in the wrong.
She's not forgotten—is she?

WALSINGHAM.

Would she were!

EUSTACE.

Perhaps thou lov'st her still?

WALSINGHAM.

To madness! There's
My malady. I love her—not what she is,
But what she was. What's present—that's her swerving,
That's palpable, which you may see, touch, handle,
Define, weigh, prove by any test is real—
Feels but a phantasm, a conceit, a dream,
A horrible one!—in contrast with what's past,
Her worth, her love, her constancy, that vanish'd
Or e'er you question'd them.

EUSTACE.

Art sure of that?
Come, come, thou'rt not, at least, thou'rt not quite sure.
Now did she stand before thee undismay'd,
Confiding in thy honour—say thy patience—
Say thy endurance—

WALSINGHAM.

If my eyes could look
The mandate of my soul, they would flash lightning on her,
To blast her where she stood! What ails thee?

EUSTACE.

Nought—
What did I do? How did I look? What saw'st,
To ask? Did I turn pale, or start, or what?
Do I tremble? Feel!—I am past fear, grief, pain,
As death! Give me thy arm, and come with me.
I'll shew thee what a piece of rock thou thought'st
Did quake. Thou a false woman, as thou think'st her,
Would'st revenge—I would revenge a woman wrong'd,
Bitterly wrong'd; so wrong'd, that after her
None should complain of hardship! Come and see,
Which holds his purpose most tenaciously. [*They go out.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber in HERO'S *House at Greenwich.*

Enter SIR VALENTINE *and* CLEVER.

SIR VALENTINE.

I tell thee, I must see her!

CLEVER.

Friend, thy face,
Albeit no modest one, thy deeds outdo
In forwardness! I brought thee but to see
The maiden's house—and thou would'st enter it!
Nor therewith rest'st content—but must have speech
With her that owns it, and escheweth thee
As all ungodly things!

SIR VALENTINE.

And I will have it!
So tell thyself—but gently say to her,
A stranger craveth audience. Mind—a stranger.
And do my bidding; else I may forget
Thou art a man of peace, and, may be, beat thee.
Yea—beat thee—I repeat it! and, I pray thee,
Make me not do 't again!

CLEVER.

I will submit—
'Ere I will use the argument o' th' flesh,
For that would hurt my spirit. Umph! I am gone!

[*Goes out.*

SIR VALENTINE.

So far, so well! Admittance I have gain'd,
And now an audience wait—but doubtingly.
Her cousin!—Then behoves me change my name,
Else, knowing me for Hero's suitor, she
Will spurn me. Yes! I'll even call myself
Sir Launcelot de Vere.—Can this be she?
The knave hath mock'd me—and the world of hopes
That sudden rose to my imagining
Doth melt to nothing.—Stay!—It forms again!
It grows to probability.—No vapour
That takes a passing form, is here and gone,
But a sincere and palpable creation!
Another Hero is there—or I do see
The same!—Oh, likeness to beholding, e'en
Incredible! that makes with wonderment
The vision waver, and the utterance fail!

Enter HERO (*disguised as before*).

HERO.

Well? What's your will?

SIR VALENTINE.

Forgive me, lady, if,
With occupation of mine eyes, awhile
I did forget the office of my tongue
To give thee 'custom'd salutation.
Still would I gaze, nor speak; art what thou seem'st?

HERO.

What seem I, friend?

SIR VALENTINE.

Likeness—unlikeness! A thing

Most different—and yet the very same!
What I would give averment of most strong—
Again most strong deny! The form of the bane,
With the sweet virtue of the antidote!
The rose, was canker'd yesterday, to-day
Freshness and soundness to the very core!
Oh beauty! that doth know its proper pride,
And nothing deigns to ask to set it off
Except simplicity, that offers nought,
Yet all that's due performs! I have not liv'd
Till now!—I have but dealt with shows of life,
Automatons, that do not know themselves,
But act from causes are no part of them!
But here is nature's mechanism—mind
And soul—a body fitting them, informing
With motions of their own.

HERO.

Friend, art thou mad?

SIR VALENTINE.

Mad, lady?

HERO.

Rational, thou canst not be!

SIR VALENTINE.

Not rational?

HERO.

If that—which much I doubt—
Certain not favour'd with the grace of truth.

SIR VALENTINE.

Doubt'st thou I utter aught but truth?

HERO.

I doubt
Thy wits, thy wisdom, or thy truth. Not mad,
Thou art not wise—if wise, thou speak'st not truth.
And sooth to say, thy dress of vanity,
Thy looks of wildness, and thy air assur'd,
Where one who knew propriety would feel
Disturbance—this abrupt intrusion, which
Nor leave, nor introduction, nor acquaintance
Doth justify—approve thee void of truth,
Unwise, or mad!—if none of these, a man
Of cloddish nature, base and ignorant!

SIR VALENTINE.

Oh! say not cloddish nature! Say not base
Nor ignorant! It is the dignity
Of man, that the bright stars do tempt his mind
To scan the empyrean where they sit,
Plac'd infinite beyond terrestrial reach,
And scan their uses and their essences,—
High argument of his affinity
To him that made them, and the immortal light
That shall outlast this filmy shadowy sphere
Whereon they look and smile! 'Twas told to me
That thou wast perfect fair—I doubted that,
For I had found, methought, the paragon
Of beauty's wealth in woman! then 'twas said
That thou wast wise—I wish'd thee that, for still,
Tho' oft at fault, in noble house I have lodg'd
Noble inhabitant! 'twas said again
That thou wast good—then I believ'd thee wise,
For wisdom should bear goodness or no fruit!
And, good and wise, believ'd thee fairest too,

And coveted ! Nor come I without leave—
Thy simple life eschewing worldly forms,
Was pledge for leave ! Nor lack I introduction
That honest errand bring to vouch for me.
Nor, least of all, acquaintance—I have known thee
Since matur'd thought, my nature's fondest wish
Informing, told it loveliness of soul,
Yet more than body, doth belong to woman,
And, therewith when abiding, doth make up
The highest sum that earthly happiness
Amounts to—nearest what we hope in Heaven.

HERO.

Friend, dost thou know thou talkest to a worm ?

SIR VALENTINE.

A worm ?

HERO.

A mite !

SIR VALENTINE.

A mite ?

HERO.

Nor yet a mite—
A congregate of evils, whereunto
The worm and mite are strangers !

SIR VALENTINE.

Evils !

HERO.

Know'st not
That beauty will take cold ? will have the tooth-ache ?
Will catch a fever ?—that its peachy cheek
Will canker in a night ?—that it's sweet lips,

Palace of smiles, spasm doth compel to change
Their garish tenants for uncouth contortions?
That its fair dress of pride—its velvet skin—
Humours will spot, discolour?—that, in brief,
It is a thing in value vanishing
As fickle merchandise, which rates to-day
Enormously—the next, may go a begging?
And, worse than all, that its chief merit lies
In wishing, not possessing?—coveted,
Of purchase measureless—obtain'd, worth nothing?

SIR VALENTINE.

Thou mean'st the beauty that but meets the eye?

HERO.

I mean the beauty thou alone dost see,
And prov'st thou only see'st. Why, what pains
Thou takest with a common piece of clay
To set it off! a fine account to turn
The bow of God to—meant for spiritual,
And not corporeal use—with divers tints
To clothe thy body! besides lading it
With the mind's produce—gems and metals—proof
Far more *without* concerns thee than *within!*
Oh! that a nature of immortal reach
Should house its aspirations in a crib
Like this poor tiny world! and, taught to look
Above the coronets of the fair stars,
Go proud with grains of dust and gossamer,
The property of things inferior to him,
As motes unto the sun! But I forget—thy errand?

SIR VALENTINE.

Love!

HERO.

'Tis clear, thou'rt mad! What! love
Whom thou did'st never see?

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, pardon me
And let thy patience lend me audience, while
I show thee my credentials, on the faith
Of which I come. I have seen thee very oft—

HERO.

Stark mad!

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, rational—as rational
As reason in its sober'st, perfect mood—
Held converse with thee, countless times.

HERO.

Broke loose
From Bedlam!

SIR VALENTINE.

Walk'd and sat with thee—

HERO.

I trust
Thy keeper is at hand!

SIR VALENTINE.

He came with me.

HERO.

Where is he?

SIR VALENTINE.

Here, altho' thou see'st him not.
My keeper's Love. I have woo'd thee for a month!

HERO.

Hoa! help!

SIR VALENTINE.

Be not alarm'd.

HERO.

Nay, touch me not!
When did'st thou break thy chains?

SIR VALENTINE.

I wear them yet;
The subtle ones that self-same beauty forg'd,
Which now I look upon—most gorgeous dress,
But by another worn.

HERO.

Oh! you have lov'd
One that resembles me.

SIR VALENTINE.

I have.

HERO.

'Tis not
A fit, then?

SIR VALENTINE.

No; for fits are vanishing.
This is a mood like nature's, lasts for life.

Enter CLEVER.

CLEVER.

Why did'st thou call? I heard thy voice, in fear.

HERO.

All's well, good Obadiah.

CLEVER.

Is it so?
Then I may go again. Young man, beware

Thou frighten'st not that maiden. We are meek,
And offer not offence; but meeting it,
As injury will make the worm rebel,
We turn, and we are strong—yea, very strong!
Whose wrath, albeit a pebble, hath avail
To smite a giant!—therefore, tempt it not!
Umph! [*Exit.*

HERO.

Thou hast known a maiden like me?

SIR VALENTINE.

Yes;
I have lov'd a maid, most like thee—most unlike;
Without, as costly—but within, as poor
To thee, as penury to affluence.

HERO.

And did'st thou love and woo her for a month,
And a defaulter thus? 'Twas grievous lack
Of penetration.

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, 'twas specious show
That valid credit won.

HERO.

Thou art a man
Like all thy worldly class, of shallow mind.
Thy heart is in thine eyes: what pleaseth them
Is sure of that.

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, I had then lov'd on.

HERO.

What cur'd thy love?

SIR VALENTINE.

I saw her in a dance
Light nature show—

HERO.

A dance! Oh! I have heard
Of such a thing. An idle pastime. What
But folly comes of folly? Do you dance?

SIR VALENTINE.

I do.

HERO.

What kind of a thing is it? Come, shew me!

SIR VALENTINE.

I pray you to excuse me.

HERO.

Nay, but dance.

SIR VALENTINE.

I pray you, ask me not.

HERO.

Thou dancest badly?

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, I have won some credit in the dance.

HERO.

Then do the thing thou hast won credit by.

SIR VALENTINE.

I cannot.

HERO.

Friend, thou art asham'd to dance.

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, not asham'd.

HERO.

Then dance!

SIR VALENTINE.

'Twere out of time
And place.

HERO.

What, out of time and place, and to
A man of gallantry, to do the thing
A lady wishes him; and he the while
On sufferance in her presence! I do see!
Thou art in a grave mood, and for a man to dance,
And look like Solomon, I must suppose
Were more offence to seriousness, than wear
A cap and bells. Friend, it is very clear
Thou canst not dance, and look like a wise man—
Yet thou didst woo a lady, thou did'st say,
And cast her off, because she did not dance
With gravity!

SIR VALENTINE.

She danced with lightness more
Than lightest measure warranted. No thing
A modest woman does—say that it touches
The utmost verge of license—but that cincture,
Of better proof than zone of adamant,
Its holy and offence-repelling fires
Doth wave around her, that the libertine,
Unwon by honour, yet is tam'd by awe!
She danc'd to gladden eyes whose burning glances
Turn thoughts of honest men on flashing swords,
On flame at stains washed out alone by blood!
The empire of her beauty giving prey
To parasites, who love for their own ends,
And by their homage shame!

HERO.

We have talk'd enough.

SIR VALENTINE.

Your pardon! Yet we have not talk'd at all—
The errand yet untold, that brought me here—
I would have leave to woo thee.

HERO.

Thou! a man
Of the vain world!

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, of no world but thine!

HERO.

Thou of my world! How com'st thou by these gauds—
Lace, ribbons, tinsel, trinkets, slashes—not
To name that most egregious vanity
Thou mountest in thy cap, and the poor bird
It was purloin'd from wore for use, not show!
Rebuke and lesson to its wiser lord!
There's not a portion of thee but bespeaks
Ransacking of the earth and sea—and all
To recommend thee unto eyes, whose owners,
Be they the homeliest, behold thy betters
In their own mirrors.

SIR VALENTINE.

I will dress to please
The eyes of none but thee.

HERO.

Thou should'st be rich—
Too rich for modest happiness, and all
Beyond is but the name! Riches are bars

Prevent us enter Heaven; how then be doors
On earth to admit us unto aught of Heaven?
How many hundreds brings thy rental in?

SIR VALENTINE.

As many as make up a thousand pounds
To welcome every quarter.

HERO.

Poor young man!
How I do pity thee!

SIR VALENTINE.

I will reduce
My revenue.

HERO.

Can'st thou reduce the wants
Thy revenue hath gender'd—foes to thee
Under the masques of friends?

SIR VALENTINE.

My every want
Is now summ'd up in one.

HERO.

Hast thou a title?
How art thou nam'd?

SIR VALENTINE.

Sir Launcelot de Vere.

HERO.

How would'st thou bear be called plain Launcelot?
Thou would'st not know thyself. We have no titles.
Names, being of themselves no part of us,
We only value as distinguishing
One from another. Stephen, Ephraim,

John, Obadiah, Solomon, suffice.
All adjuncts else, as Misters, Sirs, Earls, Dukes,
We do regard as superfluities.
Sir Valentine de Grey! I neither like
Title nor Christian name. More proper far
Would Peter fit—or Mark, or John, or Luke,
Or Nicodemus—names of men of peace,
And sounding passing sweet.

SIR VALENTINE.

The name is mine
Thou givest me.

HERO.

So thou believest now:
To-morrow, thou wilt be the former man.
Nor must I longer talk with thee; for sweet
I own the proffer of thy duty comes,
Altho' by me received mistrustingly.
Persist not, friend, or I will wholly doubt
What half I would believe;—which, if indeed
Thou mean'st—and, here, the frankness of a maid
Doth overshoot her coyness—thou can'st prove
Hath matter weightier than airy words.
Farewell! What shall I call thee?

SIR VALENTINE.

Launcelot.

HERO.

So soon forgot.

SIR VALENTINE.

Mark, Obadiah, Job,
Peter, or—or—I lack the other names.

HERO.

No matter! These are grateful as the rest,
Nor 'mongst them Peter least! What a sweet name
Is Peter!—I will call thee Peter, tho'
It be for the last time (*sighs*). Farewell, friend Peter.

SIR VALENTINE.

Stay! How may I call thee?

HERO.

Say, Ruth.

SIR VALENTINE.

Farewell,
Fair Ruth!

HERO.

Fair Ruth! So soon forgot again!
Friend Ruth, thou ought'st to say.

SIR VALENTINE.

Friend Ruth, farewell!
And yet another word! Have I thy leave
To come to thee again?

HERO.

That must depend
On how thou com'st.

SIR VALENTINE.

Then sure I come again!
Friend Ruth!

HERO.

Friend Peter?

SIR VALENTINE.

May we not shake hands?

HERO.

That must depend on how thou shakest hands.

SIR VALENTINE.

Why, how should I shake hands?

HERO.

Why, soberly.

SIR VALENTINE.

Then soberly, friend Ruth, shake hands with me.

HERO.

There, that is long enough!

SIR VALENTINE.

One more word yet—
Friend Ruth, may I not kiss thy hand?

HERO.

Friend Peter!

SIR VALENTINE.

I'll kiss it soberly—yea, soberly.
Farewell—once more—farewell!—One more.—It is
A banquet gathers appetite.

Enter CLEVER.

CLEVER.

Young man,
What do'st thou?

SIR VALENTINE.

Nothing.

CLEVER.

Yea, a thing doth vex
The spirit of the maiden, and to mine
Doth give disturbance—yea, a forward thing,
Abomination to the faithful—yea,
Abomination.—Go! [*Placing himself between them.*

SIR VALENTINE.

Farewell!

CLEVER.

Avaunt!
Such things become not eyes like her's or mine
To look upon.—Avoid!

SIR VALENTINE.

Farewell! I'll come
Again.

HERO.

Then come with more discretion, friend.

CLEVER.

Thou hear'st—avoid! Remove thee hence! Begone!
Make not a crook, friend, of thy body—say
Farewell—do nothing more—and go!

SIR VALENTINE.

Farewell!

HERO.

Farewell!

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Park.

Enter LORD ATHUNREE *and* FELTON.

LORD ATHUNREE.

I did appoint him to attend me here.
Behoves my door and he be strangers, lest
Our practices be trac'd. Want dogs him still,
And fits him for my purpose, by the threat
Of her pernicious tooth. Yet there 's a weakness,
I would he had not. He doth love a child;
Which shews his nature is not callous all;
Whence do I oft times dread some start of ruth.
But finds he out fair Hero's close retreat,
The meagre knave shall fatten. Soft! he 's here—
Well, have you traced her?

Enter LEWSON.

LEWSON.

Yes; she is at Greenwich,
Where I and mine do live and famish.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Fool!
Not to have guess'd as much, and know she hath
A villa there. Resides she by herself?

LEWSON.

She does.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Then is she mine. Can'st thou obtain
Secret admission?

LEWSON.

Easily, my Lord;
Into her very chamber, which doth open
Into a garden.

LORD ATHUNREE.

It must be done to-night.

LEWSON.

Most strangely is she chang'd.

LORD ATHUNREE.

How?

LEWSON.

In her dress,
That 's of the fashion of that formal sect,
Which at all worldly modes exception takes.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Indeed! some plot's on foot, and doth concern
Her quarrel with Sir Valentine. To-night,
She gives me lodging. Stay—we must proceed
With such exactitude, the sun and dial
Shall vary soon as we! I'll write it down. [*Writes.*
'Sdeath! I must change a word! I'll write it o'er

Again, that thou may'st have no scratch to hang
Excuse for failure on. There. Be observant
To the syllable. Away! Thy greatest hire,
For former service, I will double for thee,
Succeed'st thou but in this.

LEWSON.

Misgive not, Sir;
I ne'er before did fail you. But, so please you,
Some present prompt supply. My children starve!
My wife, to find them half a meal a day,
Hath worn herself to skin and bone, and now
Can drag her limbs no more to forage for them.
Their pressing need relieve, and do with me
Whate'er thou wilt.

LORD ATHUNREE.

There!

LEWSON.

All is noted here,
Behoveth me to heed?

LORD ATHUNREE.

No jot forgot.
I may rely upon thee?

LEWSON.

As on one
Whose life is in thy hands. [*Goes out.*

LORD ATHUNREE.

The cards do turn.

FELTON.

I pray you, what intend you?

LORD ATHUNREE.

He obtains
Admittance; I am on the watch, without;

She is alarm'd; I hear her cry for help;
And to her rescue naturally come.
I enter how I can, and once within,
Shape as I may the rest—assured of this,
She will accept protection; giving which,
I cast what colour on the case I will,
Ensuring payment full.

FELTON.

Thou art the prince
Of plotters!

LORD ATHUNREE.

Thou art no less royal there.
So hold we charge of one another's secrets,
Neither is like to break.

Enter EUSTACE *and* WALSINGHAM.

EUSTACE.

Lord Athunree,
I do accuse thee of a murder! and
Do undertake to justify myself,
At the point of the sword. Hast thou the courage to
Abide the trial, whereunto I now
Demand of thee thou fixest time and place,
For thy defence? I do repeat the charge
And challenge too—thou art a murderer!
And I demand thou pay the penalty,
Which if I prove defaulter in exacting,
I am content to leaguer my own life.
For the third time, I charge thee with the deed!
Of felony more capital accuse thee
Than ever caitiff on the scaffold paid
The forfeit of! A murder cowardly!

Unparallel'd! past human nature savage!
Wilt thou confront me? Wilt thou? Can'st thou? Dar'st thou?

LORD ATHUNREE.

Doubt'st thou my answer prompt as thy demand?

EUSTACE.

Give it, and leave not room for question! Where,
And when, shall we the mortal issue try?

LORD ATHUNREE.

To-morrow!—Stay!—that gentleman thy friend?

EUSTACE.

He is.

LORD ATHUNREE.

He passes then as voucher for thee.
Yet I'll prevent miscarriage in the thing
Thy heart so earnestly is bent upon,
To its deep cost, I fear. There! time and place
You see are written down.

[*Writes on the back of the paper he had first written upon.*

EUSTACE.

For this I thank you,
That I may thoroughly be quits with you,
And all the payment on thy side be due.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Farewell! Thou art young, but yet more rash than young!

EUSTACE.

I am not rash, but by reflection act
As I do now, with hope my arm will prove
Staunch as my tongue. Thou art a murderer!

[LORD ATHUNREE *and* FELTON *go out.*

WALSINGHAM.

My fellow-student! Wonder hitherto
Hath tied my tongue! Has he a wrong with thee
To settle too?

EUSTACE.

He has! Let's see what time and place
He hath appointed? Ha! what's here?
Oh, Providence is here! (*Aside.*) A plot to ensnare,
In helpless ruin like to mine, the heart
In girlhood still was nearest to my own.
Then must I see thee, Hero! Pride must now
Give way to love. Occasion calls me hence,
More urgent yet than that which brought me hither.
Nor must we go together. Question not!
But, at our place of practice, give me meeting
An hour at least ere noon.

WALSINGHAM.

I shall not fail. [*Goes out.*

EUSTACE.

Oh, what a case is mine, to wear the brand
I never merited!—to be denounc'd
The child of guilt, that am the daughter free—
Except the primal all-referring lapse—
Of innocence! To be amerc'd of that
The loss of which might make offence a thing
To be commiserated more than blam'd—
For nothing!—So!—Inconstant to him!—So!—
A wanton!—So!—The framer of a lie!—
He loves me still! I pardon all for that!
For that his tongue shall rail at me again—
Pronounce me faithless—liar—wanton—aught!
Aught that I am not, for the blessed Am

That still assures him mine! Oh, I do play
A novel part. A solitary maid,
Herself to vindicate her injur'd name!
No father, brother, friend, to plead the cause
Of her wrong'd honour, and her baffled love!
No champion left her but a woman's arm
Back'd by a woman's heart!—yet, trusting these,
And to just Heaven appealing, resolute
For life or death to meet the mortal strife!—
But where is Hero? Does thy friend forget thee,
And thou in peril? No! She flies to save thee!

[*Goes out.*

SCENE II.

A Room in HERO'S *House at Greenwich.*

Enter HERO.

HERO.

My game the more I play successfully,
The less my eagerness to win it grows.
'Tis all but mine, and thought of victory
Sits at my heart so heavy, for defeat
To turn up now were respite to me! respite!
False gains are poor possessions, bringing not
Content—the touchstone of true happiness!
And yet I punish him! For what? for right?
Retaliation of offended wrong!
Yet did he bear me beyond patience hard.
At once to throw off duty! and my slave

To start up my dictator, that ne'er yet
Met bended brow of man—in presence too
Where vassal homage had awaited me!
He should be made to bow! and, once become
My thorough captive, spurns for spurning take!
Yet doth he raise him, by those lofty thoughts
He breathes of zeal and honor for my sex,
While I do sink as coming short thereof!
With this regard I fail. I must see nought
Except my purpose—by the dread of loss
Yet to enhance my value in his eyes,
Propound my terms, and to the issue come
That shews him foil'd, and me the conqueror!

Enter CLEVER.

CLEVER.

Ma'am, he is come!

HERO.

Then shew him in, and mind
What we arrang'd, touching those friends of mine
I am to summon from the other Room. [CLEVER *goes out.*
How shall I struggle thro' the race, wherein
I gasp at setting out!

Enter CLEVER, *shewing in* SIR VALENTINE.

CLEVER.

Here is the man
That wants to speak with thee—be careful, for
I like his habit better than his looks.
He minds me of some child of Satan, who
My spirit hath offended—watch him, Ruth,
And advertise me if he troubleth thee. [*Goes out.*

HERO.

Thy business, friend?

SIR VALENTINE.

Dost thou not know it?

HERO.

Yea!
If fits thy purpose, friend, thy habit, grave,
And goodly must it be—what is its shape?
Instruction or admonishment, or what?
Unfold thee. Be it righteous and discreet,
I'll hear it as an humble sister ought.

SIR VALENTINE.

Dost thou not know me?

HERO.

Yea! that thou art one
Amongst the faithful—but I know not who
That one may be.

SIR VALENTINE.

Not know me, sister Ruth?

HERO.

Oh! is it you, friend Peter, come again
Into a new man chang'd!

SIR VALENTINE.

So chang'd for thee!
My fortune I've reduced. Made o'er to thee
For purposes of heavenly charity!

HERO.

Made o'er thy fortune? Could I this believe? [*Aside.*

SIR VALENTINE.

My thousands, lady, have since yesterday

To hundreds dwindled, at thy will. If that
Contents thee not, but still I seem too rich,
Say but the word, the hundreds shrink to tens—
The tens to units—these again to nought,
That my fond love may win most rich reward.

HERO.

I dream'd not of such love! [*Aside.*

SIR VALENTINE.

My title gone.

HERO.

Thy title gone!

SIR VALENTINE.

Had it been costlier,
More readily it had been thrown away,
As to thy wish, whereto it gave offence,
A meeter sacrifice! Plain gentleman
Is all they rate me now; if that's too high,
I'll be plain yeoman, for thy gentle sake;
If that, low hind! aught lady, aught! to please
The wise desires are guardians to thy love!

HERO.

His title likewise gone! I have o'ershot
My mark! I'll stop!—Too late—I must go on!—
Thy work not yet complete. Our sect, thou know'st,
Prohibits marriage, save amongst its own;
To number thee with whom if thou inclin'st
To recommend thee, it behoves thee win
Some brother's, sister's, word—such are at hand—
Wilt thou submit thee to their scrutiny?

SIR VALENTINE.

At once.

HERO.

But mind, whate'er they do remark,
Thou tak'st in silence—even in good part.
It will be scandal to me else, because
Of entertaining thee.

SIR VALENTINE.

Thy bidding, law. [HERO *rings.*

Enter CLEVER.

CLEVER.

Hath he misdone? Am I to put him forth?

HERO.

No; brother Ephraim I wish to see,
And with him sister Grace.

CLEVER.

They saw the man
Ascend the steps, and when he was let in,
They op'd the door themselves, and vanished!
Thereto advis'd by his forbidding looks.
Friend Ruth, he's poison to thee. Yesterday
I lost much grace accompanying him
From London unto Greenwich, so he vex'd
My spirit by the lightness of his gait,
And mortified me, as he drew the eyes
Of flaunting damsels on him! To reform him
Is hopeless, for the more I did admonish,
The more did he offend; till, scandaliz'd
Beyond endurance e'en of my meek spirit,
I wavered between option to stand still
And let him on alone, or run and leave him.
Observe moreover he's a man of wrath,—

Look at him! He could eat me up—yea, eat me
Like to a ravening lion a poor lamb!
Ne'er judged I looks of man—if inwardly
He does not bite his lips! Be sure he swears!
Yea, he blasphemeth!—Get him from thy doors!
Eject him from them! Into the highway with him!
Heed not if night or day—in sun or rain—
Or lose thy place among the faithful, Ruth!
Umph!

HERO.

See they do reject thee—yea,
They do reject thee!

SIR VALENTINE.

Do not thou the same!
Oh, let me talk to thee in my soul's speech—
List! I have stak'd my life on winning thee!
Not in my own breath, but in thine I live!
My portion in the sun, the earth, and all
The affluence from their copartnery
Deriv'd, I have made o'er to thee, nor now
Except by thy vouchsafing can enjoy!
Am I to live or die? Nay, think before
Thou speak'st, and those fair thoughts to council call,
Yet richer than the sumptuous palace which
They make their proud sojourn! So like to Heaven,
Hast not its ruth that makes us daily bless
Its governance? Thou hast! and as thou hast,
Let it beam down its influence on me,
And save thy worshipper! Thou let'st me kneel—
Sure then—O! sure I do not kneel in vain.

HERO.

Rise up! These proofs of honest passion quite
Confound me.

SIR VALENTINE.

Hear me! O, the world! the world,
That's made up of two hearts! That is the sun
It moves around! There is the verdure! There
The flower! the fruit! The spring and autumn field,
Which in the reaping grows! the mine that, work'd,
Accumulates in riches—ever free
From influences of the changing stars,
Or aught, save that which sits above them higher
Than they above the globe!—Come! make with me
E'en such a heavenly world.

HERO.

Beseech thee, rise!

SIR VALENTINE.

In hope?

HERO.

In hope! What did I say?

SIR VALENTINE.

Thou said'st—
Thou bad'st me rise in hope (*Rises*). Thy heart is mov'd.

HERO.

'Tis touch'd.

SIR VALENTINE.

And nothing more?

HERO.

Perhaps a little.

SIR VALENTINE.

How may I call that little? what's its name—
If haply of the kind I'd have it be,
'Gainst all I've thrown away, and ten times more,
I'd set it—Lady, tell me, what's its name?

Oh, deal magnanimously with me, nor
What 'tis not wrong to feel, when thou dost feel it,
Believe 'tis wrong to speak! Frankly! could'st love me?

HERO.

Frankly, I could.

SIR VALENTINE.

Once more, be frank—and dost thou?

HERO.

Frankly, I do.

SIR VALENTINE.

I said, "once more be frank,"—
Yet must I say once more be frank again.

HERO.

And if thou dost, I will be frank again.

SIR VALENTINE.

Wilt take me for thy husband?

HERO.

There's my hand—
If no impediment forbids thee, clasp it.

SIR VALENTINE.

None.

HERO.

Soft—I'll do 't! 'Twill be a sweet revenge! [*Aside.*
A thought doth strike me. Thou hast lov'd a damsel,
My likeness it should seem—and one know I,
Who to the vision so resembles me,
As doth myself, myself; nor can the ear
That hears us, well determine which is which,
In pitch and tone our voices so are one.
The damsel thou affectedst, may be she—
Her name is Hero Sutton.

SIR VALENTINE.

'Tis the same.

HERO.

Another thought doth strike me. Is the name
Thou gav'st to me, thy real one? Alas!
Thy colour mounteth! It is clear! Thou art
Sir Valentine de Grey? Alas! alas!
Your leave to be alone.

SIR VALENTINE.

Are you not well?

HERO.

Oh, yes; I'm very well. Good e'en! Quite well!
Well as a woman can be when she finds,
Too late, she rashly gave her heart away,
To one, whose value for the gift will be,
Soon as he proves 'tis his, to bid her keep it.

SIR VALENTINE.

To bid her keep it!

HERO.

As Hero Sutton rues!

SIR VALENTINE.

She never gave
Her heart to me.

HERO.

She did! you know not when
A woman gives away her heart! at times
She knows it not herself. Insensibly
It goes from her! She thinks she hath it still—
If she reflects—while smoothly runs the course
Of wooing; but if haply comes a check—
An irrecoverable—final one—
Aghast—forlorn—she stands, to find it lost,
And with it, all the world!

SIR VALENTINE.

No maid could love,
And act as she.

HERO.

How did she act?

SIR VALENTINE.

I told thee.
She danc'd to please a libertine, and pain
A man of honour, who did worship her.

HERO.

She danc'd to please no man but thee. Your eyes,
She thought upon her, did alone inspire her
In the measure. Thorough conquest of the heart,
She thought was all but her's, she hop'd to make;
And so, with all her soul endeavouring,
Did lose it all, and with it all herself!

SIR VALENTINE.

If she had told me this—

HERO.

If she had told!
When? pray thee, where? or how?—did'st name a place,
Or time, to hear her vindicate herself?
Did'st even hint it to her? In a breath,
You doubted, tried, condemn'd, and sentenc'd; nor
'Fore witnesses did'st pity her to spare her!
They should beware, who charges lay in love,
On solid grounds they make them! for, there are hearts
So proudly fond, that, wrong them here, they'll break
Or ever they will stoop to right themselves.
Much such a one is her's; and yet, with all
Her pride—for strong as that, more strong her love—
She trusts to win thee still.

SIR VALENTINE.

She gave me up, without a sigh or word.

HERO.

So had I given thee up, had I been she—
And I do love thee.

SIR VALENTINE.

See me at thy feet.

HERO.

I can't, with thought how thou hast knelt at her's.

SIR VALENTINE.

Nay, hear me, but in pity.

HERO.

She in pity
Did hear thee! Much it profited her!—much!
She now, it seems, may sue!

SIR VALENTINE.

I swear to thee
Eternal constancy!

HERO.

Thy witnesses, thy oaths to her!

SIR VALENTINE.

Where are the smiles just now
Did beam upon me?

HERO.

Quenched by Hero's tears.

SIR VALENTINE.

By Hero's tears! She never wept for me!

HERO.

She show'd thee not her tears; but what of that?
Her eyes might pour, and thou not see a drop.
I know they did so.

SIR VALENTINE.

Let me hold thy hand.

HERO.

Never, till her, thou hast wrong'd, thou offerest
To right. The world return to, thou would'st quit
It seems for me. Resume its habit ; hie
To Hero Sutton's, whom I will advise
To look for thee to-morrow eve. Repeat
What I have said to thee. If she denies
What I aver, be free to come to me,
And welcome too! If she acknowledges,
The hand of her, whose heart thou hast purloin'd,
Behoves thee ask and take.

SIR VALENTINE.

Yet hear me.

HERO.

Nay!
These are the terms on which we break or meet.

SIR VALENTINE.

If she rejects me?

HERO.

Then will Ruth be thine.

SIR VALENTINE.

If she accepts me?

HERO.

Then still thine—She dies!

[*They go out severally.*

SCENE III.

An Ante-Room leading into HERO'S *Chamber in the same House.*

Enter LEWSON, *from the Window.*

LEWSON.

Safe! Safe!—all silent! What has turn'd my feet
From flesh to lead? My body, which to bear
Their function is, doth seem to drag them on.
I wont not thus to feel. Ferrying across
From Limehouse now, I sav'd a drowning man.
Twice had he sunk in sight of his young brood,
That with their dam kept fluttering on the shore.
How they did bless me! while the standers by
Did echo them, and to inquirers say,
That ask'd who sav'd him, "Yonder 's the good man!"
And I afoot to do an evil act!
Another should have sav'd him! Let it pass!
Is this her chamber? No, her dressing-room.
Ay, here 's her woman's gear. What holds this case?
Her paint, I'll warrant—her cosmetics—aught
To give another skin; they're ne'er content
With nature's; patches, perfumes, dentifrice!
A book?—I'll wager one she durst not show!
A Bible! Umph! Strange reading that, methinks,
For a fine lady. Here's a leaf turn'd down;
What says the place? It seems to talk to me!
I'll read no further! So—what have we here?
Her letters! Excellent! Her letters!—now
To see how they can look and talk the saint,

And play the sinner still. A hundred pounds,
The first is an amour !—A wretch's prayer
For help—herself and children without food
For two whole days ! What, baggage ! beg ere rob ?
Wait for a thaw, and see thy little ones
Congeal to death i' the icy world !—with the thought
I have a feeling how the tiger's fangs
Rend for her cubs a meal !—What alms did'st hope
Her ladyship would give ?—What would suffice
The dressing of her gown she wears a night
And casts aside for foul ! What 's here—is this
Her answer—or the copy on't ? Indeed ?
Ay, when she gives she gives ! She seems to think
That poverty, like plenty, is made up
Of flesh and blood. There 's food for dam and whelps
For a whole week. The letter 's to my wife !
She din'd to-day—fall to 't—fall to 't—thy brood
May gorge them now ! Methinks I see them feed !
Heaven bless her !—What ! Heaven bless her, did I say ?
Then, what do I do here ? No more of this.
I've work to do, chimes not with thoughts like these.
No more on't. Footsteps !—so—beast to thy lair.

[*Conceals himself.*

Enter HERO ; *she goes to the window, and looks out.*

HERO.

Whether mine eye with a new spirit sees,
Or nature is grown lovelier, I know not ;
But ne'er, methinks, was sunset half so sweet !
He 's down, and yet his glory still appears,
Like to the memory of a well-spent life,
That 's golden to the last, and when 'tis o'er,
Shines in the witnesses it leaves behind.

They say, a ruddy sunset a fair day!
Oh! may it be a day without a cloud,
Which of my fate doth see the clearing up;
That I may quote it ever as a sign
Of sincere fortune, often as I say
Was ever day so bright! How calm is all—
How calm am I!—Would every breast I knew
Did lodge a heart as tranquil.—There was one—
A most strange history! Is she alive,
Or dead? (EUSTACE *appears at the window.*) Who's there?

EUSTACE (*entering*).

A friend!

HERO.

Help!

EUSTACE.

Hush! I come
For safety!

HERO.

To thyself?

EUSTACE.

To thee. Look here,—
Lest I should miss thee, I prepar'd this scroll.
More brief 'twill tell my errand, than my tongue
Could do't.

HERO (*reads*).

Lord Athunree!—This very night!
My house beset—myself by force abstracted!

EUSTACE.

If thou hast kindred in the neighbourhood,
Or friend thou can'st rely upon, forthwith
Of thy immediate danger caution them
By hands you can confide in—for my pains,
I pray you pay me with the only audience
Of some poor moments, when I'll take my leave.

HERO (*to herself*).

I need not fear him! On his o'ercast brow
'Tis grief, not guilt, that lowers.—A minute's patience,
I shall rejoin you. [*Goes out.*

EUSTACE.

Thou art happy, Hero,
And she that loves thee, weeps—but not that thou
Art happy. Thy fair fortune is the likeness
Of what was once my own! It is a face
Reminds me of a valued friend that 's gone,
And which I bless, the while it makes me weep!

HERO (*re-entering*).

What you advis'd, I've done—and now your pleasure?

EUSTACE.

Have I your leave, I'll sit. I've used some haste—
Am somewhat out of breath—I thank you! So!
Pray you be seated, too. You've had your share
Of friends?—Your 'haviour of the winning kind,
That goodness sweetens!—you are frank—you love
Another's weal more than you envy it—
And such a one makes friends.—'Mongst those you've found
You surely some do miss, else was your fate
Past earthly blessing happy?

HERO.

I've lost friends.

EUSTACE.

By—death?

HERO.

By death.

EUSTACE.

And any by misfortune?

HERO.

Misfortune!—No, not any.

EUSTACE (*rising*).

What!—not one?
Good night!

HERO.

What mean you? Do you take me for
A season friend, no stauncher than the bird
The sun doth tell his time to come and go,
And's with us when 'tis summer?—O, you wrong me!
What!—I to love, as doth that summer bird
The land he makes his gay sojourning in,
My friend, because 'tis leaf and blossom time!
Indeed you wrong me!—Knew I at this moment
A cheek I lov'd, was beggar'd of its smiles—
Not one left to it—I swear to thee the next—
If back'd my power my will—before the next,
My own should be its neighbour.—Oh! how much
You wrong me!

EUSTACE.

Glad I am I've done thee wrong—
In sooth, I am—and yet I wrong'd thee not,
I only miss'd thy meaning! Had'st not a friend
Misfortune lost thee?—not that thou shunn'dst her,
But that her heavy and most strange affliction
To thee and all her sex forbad her access?

HERO.

A friend? a sister! What a fate was her's!
Of all I valued, she the being was
I least could measure worth with. Of all grace,
The pattern was she—person, features, mind,
Heart, every thing, as nature had essay'd
To frame a work which none might find a flaw in!
And yet 'tis said, she fell—and if she did,
Let none be sure they'll stand! She couldn't fall!

There's such a thing as purity on earth,
And if she fell, there could be no such thing!
She didn't fall!—no! no!—I knew her, or
I never knew myself! Virtue with her
Was not a lesson we must con before
'Tis learn'd by heart; it was a portion of her,
Much as her stature, feature, limb or shape,
Which, saving nature's, hand did never give.
She has been outrag'd, slandered—aught—but lost!
She could not fall—she did not—could not fall!
What ails thee?

EUSTACE.

He that sets a banquet down
To famish'd lips, serves poison and not meat,
For, ten to one, the greedy guest doth die.
Yet doth he bless the host, as I bless thee,
That spread'st for me this feast!

HERO.

This feast! What feast?
Move not thy lips thus impotently, or
I'll think thou diest indeed! What feast do'st mean?
Is't one the heart makes? 'Tis—thine eyes do talk
Language 'twould tax a hundred tongues to speak!
In wonder's name, who art thou? Say thou'rt not
What thou dost seem, I'll thee tell who thou art!
Could I not do't?—Could I not?—Helen?—What?
Well? Am I right? If ever thou did'st lodge
A treasure in this breast, ne'er fear to claim it!
'Tis safe—whole—whole—demand it—take it—come—
'Tis thine as e'er it was!—Well?

EUSTACE (*speaking as* HELEN).

Hero!

HERO.

Nay,
I'll bring it to thee, then! That's right—weep on!
My sweet! my dear! my poor! my wrong'd one—yes,
Wrong'd—wrong'd—I say't again! Thou need'st not speak,
Thou hast not strength—thou'lt sleep with me to-night?—
To-morrow for thy story.

HELEN.

Nay, to-night.
I'm more myself again!—Let it be so—
Sit down awhile. How hast thou been, my Hero?

HERO.

Well, sweet, most well.

HELEN.

Now by the love
Thou bear'st me, interrupt me not, but hear
My story out. Thou hast been told, that from
A roof which shelters aught but innocence,
In company with one, whom innocence
That would be safe should shun, i' the face of day,
Thy friend was seen to issue. Thither by
A forged tale of misery alone
She was decoyed—exposed to outrage there—
Rescued by him—by him conducted thence,
Met in the street ere well her foot had left
The threshold—countenance refused her tale
By him that sole could vouch its truth—by *him*
Her tale discredited, whose credence was
Life! happiness! all but honour! In a word,
Her virtue blasted, that had ne'er known blight—
Denounced as canker'd—rotten—that was sound
As thy own, Hero—ay, as thy own!

HERO.

I know't.

HELEN.

You know't? Alas, you know it not—you think it—
Think it in the teeth of damning fact. It is
Your love—your charity. An alms—an alms—
Is all that friend so kind as even thou,
Can render now to me—yet, I'll be righted!
But fare-thee-well—'tis late!

HERO.

You'll stay with me?

HELEN.

What! let me press thy pure sheets, Hero, with
A tainted name? How I have wrong'd thee!—wouldst
Believe't? I once came to thy door—but there
I stopp'd. I was not wont to ask for leave
To enter it, and I must ask for't now!
I left thy door again—the certainty
To see it never ope' thy friend preferr'd
To but the chance to see it shut upon her.

HERO.

To but the chance to see it shut upon thee!
What warrant ever gave I for such chance?
Oh! had it wider, free'r ope'd than e'er,
It only had anticipated what
Its mistress' arms had done—what now they do!
You shall not leave—nay, in sooth you shall not!

HELEN.

In this attire, think, should I here be seen—

HERO.

I'll think of nought, but that thou here art now,
But that thou here shalt stay. Thou canst be gone
At dawn. Thou know'st a thousand things I have

To ask of thee—how we shall meet again—
Where I shall find thee—what thy projects are—
Deny me not, I pray thee! 'Twill but make
The greater beggar of me—Come! you can,
You must—you will—this is my chamber—come!

[*They go out.*

LEWSON. (*Entering in disorder.*)

I cannot do't! Heaven's on the watch against it!
'Tis said it guards the good, and if it does,
Its spirits sure are here—they are!—or why
This fearful awe come over me? I feel
As eyes were on me, that I cannot see—
Above me lips that speak but are unheard—
And hands that have a thousand thousand times
The power of flesh and blood, yet lack the bulk
Of air! Heaven will not have it be—it sets
Before mine eyes, the fruit of what I've done—
To warn me back from what I've come to do.
That hapless maiden owes her injur'd name
To me! I was the instrument to ruin her!
To fix on her the wanton's brand, that ne'er
In thought it seems did know the wanton's stain.
To damn in this world, what i' the next is blest!
Oh! heavy sin—Go, sin no more! How's this?
Go, sin no more! So said the book to me.
Then Heaven doth care for sinners, it should seem!
A blessed book! I'll go and sin no more!
The chime! It lacks a quarter of an hour,
The very clock doth watch me. Was't the hour,
They'd have me in their fearful toils again!
Away! away! speed feet, while ye are free,
Softly and swift—the minutes fly! away! [*Exit.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

HERO'S *Town House.*

Enter SIR WILLIAM SUTTON *and* EMILY.

SIR WILLIAM.

What? Helen Mowbray come to life again?

EMILY.

'Tis even so; and metamorphos'd as
You ne'er would dream. But pray you, use despatch.
On the reverse of this she gave your niece,
And which unthinkingly no doubt was given
To her, 'tis clear some mortal work 's on hand—
For here are time, and place, and weapon nam'd,
Upon the part of base Lord Athunree.
There yet is time! Prevent it, while you may!

SIR WILLIAM (*rings the bell*).

Hark, Sir! Take charge of this, and have it straight
Put into execution by the chief
O' the city officers—look to it well!
And now, what means this full assembly call'd
Of friends and relatives, to feast with Hero?

EMILY.

I must not tell—but guess.

SIR WILLIAM.

I cannot guess
The shapes particular of women's fancies,
Especially in one of Hero's vein.
Retains she her disguise?

EMILY.

No; casts it off—
And with it, habit more a part of her.
She is chang'd beyond belief.

SIR WILLIAM.

Not my belief,
When I do see it.

EMILY.

I must hie to her,
And set her mind at rest on this affair,
Touching her friend, which chance reveal'd to her,
In time, I trust, the issue to prevent.
You have given order they be hither brought?

SIR WILLIAM.

I have. Where's Hero?

EMILY.

In the library,
In earnest converse still with that strange man,
Who prayed an audience with her, and, I think,
Brought news that has surpris'd her. Dinner time
Will see an end, and clearing up of all.

[*They go out severally.*

SCENE II.

The outskirts of LONDON.

Enter WALSINGHAM *and* HELEN (*still in the disguise of* EUSTACE.)

WALSINGHAM.

Not yet arriv'd!

HELEN.

'Tis 'fore the time.

WALSINGHAM.

How feel you?

HELEN.

Collected, and myself.

WALSINGHAM.

You look so. Clear
Your 'haviour, as this day of trial only
The ordinary mate of yesterday,
You'll win!

HELEN.

I shall!—I am resolv'd to win.

WALSINGHAM.

Shew me thy sword.

HELEN.

I cannot draw it, but
My life must follow.

WALSINGHAM.

How?

HELEN.

It is my heart—
This which I wear, is nothing. Call it steel,

'Tis steel!—a straw, it even is a straw!
Its stamina not lodging in itself,
But in the use that's made on't.

WALSINGHAM.

This is calm,
Upon the eve of combat.

HELEN.

Walsingham,
There is a kind of nature that clears up
The instant it confronts a trying thing.
In common evils, hesitates and fears;
In ills of moment, shows sedate resolve.

WALSINGHAM.

Why, that is woman's proper contradiction.

HELEN.

It passes for 't; but sometimes 'bides in man,
Not therein less of his high caste deserving,
Tho' so resembling woman! Think'st not so?

WALSINGHAM.

Assuredly.

HELEN.

You see this mood is mine,
Nor was I on my guard to let it out—
'Twill lose me credit with you. Best have pass'd
For Sir Redoubtable any day o' the year!
You more had thought of me.

WALSINGHAM.

No!

HELEN.

You say I am calm?
I am so—that is, as to the issue of
This mortal meeting—for 'tis mortal!—but
I have a trouble, and—wilt thou believe me?

'Tis touching thee!—It grieves me, Walsingham,
To leave thee an abused man behind me!
What thou didst tell me I have ponder'd well,
And thereon founded arguments, methinks,
More solid than I urg'd on you before.
They are here—your poor friend's legacy to you!
[*Gives a paper.*
Stop!—you're about to speak—don't speak as yet.
If I should fall, you pledge your gentle word,
My body you will have direct convey'd
Unto the lady's I have herein nam'd,
[*Gives another paper.*
Deliver'd to her custody—her own?
Nor until then, one fast'ning, fold, loop, thread
O' the vesture, thou wilt suffer be disturb'd—
No, not to search, or probe, or staunch a wound,
Or settle if indeed alive or dead,
Or any thing! To this, thou pledgest thee?

WALSINGHAM.

Dear boy, I do!

HELEN.

Another thing—

WALSINGHAM.

What is 't?
Thou pausest, as in doubt I'll grant it thee.
Whate'er it be, I'll swear to do it.

HELEN.

Ha!
Then thou dost set my heart indeed at rest!
Mind, thou hast sworn to do 't. Revenge me not!
That comprehendeth all! Don't speak again,
Till I have done, quite done. Thou lovest me?

WALSINGHAM.

I do.

HELEN.

How much?

WALSINGHAM.

As never man before!

HELEN.

Speak not of love gone by, but present love.
With those thou lovest now, how rates thy love?

WALSINGHAM.

As first!

HELEN.

As first of all?

WALSINGHAM.

Of all!

HELEN.

All friends?
Not one before me?

WALSINGHAM.

No!

HELEN.

Not one?

WALSINGHAM.

Not one.

HELEN.

And all love told?

WALSINGHAM.

All love, but love itself.

HELEN.

Shake hands!—We'll say good bye before they come,
Lest there arrive occasion, and no time!
Good bye!—Oh, happy women, that are friends!
They may embrace—men cannot do so.

WALSINGHAM.

Yes,
When they are brothers.

HELEN.

Feel'st thou as my brother?
I feel as I were thine.

WALSINGHAM.

My boy! my boy! [*Embracing* HELEN.
Heaven!—but thou faint'st!

HELEN.

No!—Are they coming?—Heaven
Reward thee, for thy precious love of me!
They are at hand—Good bye!

WALSINGHAM.

Show me thy sword!
'Tis somewhat longer, I believe, than mine,
And I would try the depth of yonder stream,
In case we need to wade it.

[*Goes out, and returns without the sword.*

It has slipp'd,
And gone down to the bottom!—Boy, your quarrel's mine:
To humour thee, did I consent to play
The second to thee. Stand aside, with broad
And lusty breast and sinewy arm, and see
Thy stripling form the deadly point oppose
In the athletic villain's practis'd hand,
Instead of grasping thee with loving force,
Like to a doting father his boy-son,
Or elder brother his dear younger one,
Taking thy place, and swinging thee away!
No, boy! Before thy young veins part a drop
Of their life's streams, my channel shall run dry!

HELEN.

Is this fair, Walsingham?

WALSINGHAM.

Yet, hear me on!

I find I could not live without thee; so
Guarding thy life, I but protect my own.
That's fair—that's rational—that's sound in nature!
Want'st further reason?—I will give it thee—
Thou art like her!

HELEN.

Whom?

WALSINGHAM.

Boy, hast thou read my soul—
Have I turn'd o'er its every page to thee—
Love, hate, hope, doubt, possession, loss, bliss, pain,
Contentment, and despair—and in each one
Shown thee one all-pervading cause enwrit,
For nothing? Whom could I compare thee to,
But her—the heroine of my sad story?
Whom much thou dost resemble! Hast thou never
Remark'd me gazing in abstraction on thee,
As tho', upon perusal of thy face,
While seem'd mine eye intent, my soul did pore
Upon some other thing?—I have done it oft—
Will do it once again! Your eyes are her's,
In form and hue, but sunk; a darkness too,
Not heavy, yet enough to make a cloud,
Sits—not disparagingly tho'—'neath thine;
Her's were two starry brilliants, set in pearl!
The outline of the nose is quite the same,
But that of thine is sharper—'tis thy sex.
The mouth is very like—oh, very like!
But there's a touch—a somewhat deep one too—
Of pensiveness. The cast of her's was sweetness,
Enlocking full content. The cheek is not
At all alike!—'tis high; and lank below;
And sallow—not a dimple in't—all contrast

To the rich flower'd and velvet lawn of her's.
But tho' thou art not she entire—thou art
Enough of her, to make me love thee, boy!
With such a brother-love, as brother never,
I dare be bound, for brother felt before!
I spoke not of thy hair—it is a wood
Run wild compar'd to her's, and thrice as deep
I' the shade—Yet, you are very like her!—quite
Enough, to make me pour my heart's blood out,
As water, for thy sake!—They are at hand!

HELEN.

Then let me be at least thy sword-bearer;
And when thou need'st the steel, I'll keep the sheath
Which in thy motions would embarrass thee.

WALSINGHAM.

Take it, and thank thee!

Enter LORD ATHUNREE *and* FELTON.

LORD ATHUNREE.

We are late for you, Sirs;
But not, I think, for time.

WALSINGHAM.

You are in time.

HELEN.

Draw off, till, with his second, I arrange
Preliminaries—which I know are wont,
In questions of this kind. What we decide,
I will possess you of; and then proceed.
Sir, let us speak. You know me, principal.
My place, my second would perforce usurp.
Permit him not, as you're a gentleman!
You see he is unarm'd—your rapier draw,
When I draw this, and force him stand aloof.
You promise this?

FELTON.

I do! (*Aside.*) It keeps the odds
Upon our side!

HELEN (*drawing*).

Lord Athunree, I am ready!

FELTON (*drawing, and opposing* WALSINGHAM).

Stand back, Sir! at your peril!

WALSINGHAM.

Ha!—the boy
Has baffled, and out-witted me! [*Advances.*

FELTON.

Stand back!
I bar all interruption to the game
We are summon'd here to play.

WALSINGHAM.

A coward act,
To draw upon a naked man!

FELTON.

My lord!
Why draw you not, and he his weapon out?
Proceed, my lord, at once.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Before I do,
I ask, and I must learn, in name of whom
The urchin has arraign'd, and challeng'd me.
I fight not, till I know upon what cause.

HELEN.

The cause of Helen Mowbray!

WALSINGHAM.

Drop your hand,
And let me pass!—or sure as that's a sword,
My heart is on your point!

LORD ATHUNREE.

Spite of thyself,
Another minute grant I thee to live.
I will not draw, until I know thy name.

HELEN.

Mowbray!

LORD ATHUNREE.

Her brother?

HELEN.

Any thing you please,
Caitiff without a parallel in crime!

WALSINGHAM.

A brother!—Hold! Lord Athunree! Look, Sir,
A moment give I thee, to take thy choice
'Twixt murdering me, or suffering to pass!
Heaven! do I care for life!

[*Rushes upon* FELTON, *and wrests the sword from him. At the same moment, Officers and Servants enter.*

FIRST OFFICER.

Hold! Stop!—Proceed
At your peril! you are all our prisoners, Sirs;
Sir William Sutton's warrant makes you so,
Which here I show to you. Surrender, then,
And to his niece's bear us company.

[*They all go out.* WALSINGHAM *and* HELEN *last, who stop a little behind the rest.*

WALSINGHAM.

Thou half hast kill'd me, boy! How could'st thou do so!
Or keep from one, who lov'd thee as I do,
A secret like to this? Her brother—so!
Her brother!—I shall love thee better still—
And better yet—and yet not half so well!

[*They follow.*

SCENE III.

The Street.

Enter SIR VALENTINE.

SIR VALENTINE.

Spite of my failing heart, thus far I've come
With love to urge me, love to waive me back.
My duty tender'd, fortune made or lost—
Not tender'd, absolutely lost—no chance
Permitted me to win! 'Tis Hero's form
With the fair essence—match for thing so fair—
To Hero's form without! It is a whole,
Past calculation rich, against a part,
And that the poorest—yet consummate rich.
And I must play for both, or neither win!
Or winning one, the other quite forego!
It cannot be she loves me! Hero love me!
A prideful pleasure kindles at the thought—
But comes the gentle Ruth, and puts it out
With genial brightness of bland nature, as
The sun a little fire. O sun most fair,
I richer were ne'er to have known thy light
Than knowing it to lose it. Ne'er did man
Draw lots with chances more oppos'd than mine.
A little moment I am made or lost,
Lost past retrieving—past addition made!
Then must I, like a desperate gamester, on!
Throw fear of loss aside—tho' loss of all—
And think of nothing but the chance of gain
That makes me rich for life!—past affluence!

[*Goes out.*

SCENE LAST.

A Room in HERO'S *House.*

SIR WILLIAM SUTTON *seated in the centre*—WALSINGHAM, HELEN, LORD ATHUNREE, FELTON, OFFICERS, *&c.*

SIR WILLIAM.

Lord Athunree, charg'd with intent thou stand'st
To break the peace of our right sovereign lord
The king. What answer'st thou, or dost refuse
To plead?—Is this thy hand?—Wilt answer that?
Whose'er it is, it is a villain's, lord!
For the same writer that arrang'd a fray
Did plan a felony—in danger put
A lady's jewelry, so rich to her—
Not all the caskets of the proudest line
Of noble dames, pour'd out into one heap,
Could make a blaze to match it!

LORD ATHUNREE (*aside*).

Curse my haste
For such remissness, on the back to write
Of the instructions first I pencill'd down
To give the caitiff wretch—whose guess'd miscarriage
Is now accounted for!

SIR WILLIAM.

Lord Athunree,
How say you?

LORD ATHUNREE.

For the combat you have marr'd,
My silence or denial naught avails.

You found me in the act. The challenger
You need to seek elsewhere.—I am not he.

WALSINGHAM.

Sir William, he says right.—He challeng'd not,
But he such provocation gave, as makes
The challenger more the challeng'd.—He did stain
A lady's credit, bringing it to naught,
Or causing it to pass for nothing more;
Which tresspass capital her brother here,
In form a stripling, but in mind a man,
Indeed demanded reparation for,
Which to exact, my arm assay'd, but fail'd—
For I had woo'd, and won, and, as I thought,
Alone engag'd the maid. Sir William, try,
If from that sacred seat of justice, voice
Of solemn adjuration can avail
To bring the truth to light—first, if the maid
Did fall indeed—the knowledge he thereof
Alone possessing—

SIR WILLIAM.

No, Sir; not alone!—
The maid did never fall!

WALSINGHAM.

Did never fall?
O, ponder what you say!—Not rashly—O,
Not rashly raise a wretch from the abyss
Into the light, to cast him in again
On darkness heaving darkness! Now I faint
With the day-flood that seems to burst upon me!
I say, "that seems," for such transition mocks
The doting of belief!—or heard I right?
Or knew'st thou what thou saidst? or, knowing it,
Knew'st thou didst speak on grounds of solid footing,

Something akin to rock?—It should be rock
Itself, to bear the fabric thou dost raise
Against the sea of doubts that surges on it!
O, did she never fall? Did love itself
Take sides with hate to do her hateful wrong?
To blast her—to abandon her—and leave
A prey to haggard fortune—death or madness?

SIR WILLIAM.

Collect thyself, and further audience lend,
Or bid me hold my tongue. The maiden lives.

WALSINGHAM.

Lives? Lives? Is innocent, perhaps, and loves!
O does she?

SIR WILLIAM.

Yes.

WALSINGHAM.

Thou seem'st to know what makes
My all, or naught of being! Innocent,
And lives and loves?

LORD ATHUNREE.

First prove her innocent.

SIR WILLIAM.

He cannot! what of that?—Another can!

LORD ATHUNREE.

Produce that other.

[SIR WILLIAM *beckons*—LEWSON *enters*.

LEWSON.

Here he is.

LORD ATHUNREE.

Betrayed!

WALSINGHAM.

He hath confess'd—take notice all! The lips
That blurr'd fair Helen's name hath ope'd themselves,
To damn themselves, and do the maiden right!

SIR WILLIAM.

No need confession from that riven wretch!
To that abhorred house thou saw'st her quit,
A letter, as from one she knew and lov'd,
In mortal strait entic'd her. There, assailed
With show of violence from this same man,
That lord premeditated succour brought her,
The whole his foul contrivance! You may leave!
You are known!—What penalty the law awards
For such default, be sure shall be exacted!

LORD ATHUNREE.

I do defy you—scorn you! Do your worst! [*Goes out.*

[HELEN *swooning, is caught by* WALSINGHAM.

SIR WILLIAM.

Look to thy mistress, Walsingham.

WALSINGHAM.

Where is she?—
I nothing see except this fainting boy,
Whom help me to restore.

SIR WILLIAM.

To wake him up,
Breathe in his ear the name thou lovest most!
Throw back those ebon clusters thoroughly,
And consciousness will start upon thee straight,
Thou never dream'dst of, and thou shalt confess
That love, howe'er it hath a jealous eye,
Hath not a piercing one.

WALSINGHAM.

Herself!—my own!
My sweet!—my idolis'd!—my innocent
Helen!—her eye-lids quiver—Helen! Helen!

They ope! Dost thou not know me, love? O Heaven,
Die not away again! My soul's true life!
Helen—my gentle one! My patient one!
My faithful one, unwarp'd by rudest strain!
My loving one!—More loving—yes, I say it
That love thee best—more loving yet than lov'd!
Look at me! Answer me! This semblance but
Of death, is death itself to me! 'Tis I—
'Tis Walsingham!—'Tis I—repentingly,
Humbly, imploring thee to speak to him,
To look upon him—pity him!—forgive him!

HELEN.

I love thee, Walsingham. Have all thou ask'st
In that one little word!

[*They retire.* SIR VALENTINE *enters.*

SIR WILLIAM.

Sir Valentine!

SIR VALENTINE.

The same, Sir William Sutton.

SIR WILLIAM.

You are welcome.

SIR VALENTINE.

In strait where things like life and death depend,
Suspense is but the rack—I'll know my fate!
Sir William Sutton, I am come to crave
An audience of your niece.

SIR WILLIAM.

Apprise my niece
Sir Valentine de Grey would speak with her.

SIR VALENTINE.

At thought of sight of that proud form again,

Old motions in me stir—but only stir.
Come other thoughts—they are at once at rest!

[HERO *enters, most magnificently attired.*

O what a tower of grace and loveliness,
And stateliness, and absolute command,
She bursts upon mine eyes! Were't tenanted
As I would have it!

HERO.

Well, Sir Valentine!
Your will?

SIR VALENTINE.

I come a promise to redeem,
Thou'lt think most strange, as I do, that did make it.
A suit I have, the gain or loss of which
Depends on thee, although to thee not pleaded!
Shall I be pardon'd, who, against my will,
Past sufferance presume?

HERO.

Not mine! Say on.

SIR VALENTINE.

It is the voice of Ruth! I wonder not
At that—but breathing Ruth's benignity!

HERO.

Shall I *entreat* thee say thy wish?

SIR VALENTINE.

More bland
The accents yet! Can Ruth have told me right,
And does she love me?

HERO.

It doth pain me, Sir,
To mark such hesitation, when, to have,

You only have to ask; and, asking, do
A pleasure—giving leave to pleasure you.

SIR VALENTINE (*aside*).

No strain hath love, if this of other mood.
I win her, and am lost! O gain to lose!

SIR WILLIAM.

My niece awaits your question.

HERO.

Uncle, peace.
Give him his time—the measure on't his will!
To look for pleasure is itself a pleasure.
But half they feast who to a feast sit down
The moment it is named. Say, that he wait
An hour, why then, so much I banquet more,
And yet fall to with relish.

SIR VALENTINE.

O such words
To fall from Hero's lips a month before!
Come certainty, whate'er along with it!
Dost thou affect me?

HERO.

Yes, Sir Valentine.

SIR VALENTINE.

Wilt take me for thy husband?

HERO.

Yes, again.

SIR VALENTINE.

Good bye, sweet Ruth!

HERO.

Strange welcome this!

SIR VALENTINE.

Good bye
To sweet content of modest happiness!
Lady, my title's gone!

HERO.

For that receive
More hearty welcome than thou gav'st to me.

SIR VALENTINE.

My fortune dwindled.

HERO.

As it sinks you rise.
For that receive more hearty welcome yet.

SIR VALENTINE.

My tastes are altered.

HERO.

Tell me what their kind,
They shall be mine—whate'er thy taste, rank, state,
My state, my rank, my tastes, shall be the same!

SIR VALENTINE.

Then must we wed.—O for that plumed tiar,
The simple hood!—that costly lace, the coif
Close pinn'd and modest clear!—that gorgeous dress,
The gown embroider'd with humility!

HERO.

They are donn'd at thy command, and these cast off.

SIR VALENTINE.

And canst thou, too, the vesture of the mind
That made thee cherish these, cast off?

HERO.

I can!
Hard things which love cannot for love perform.

SIR VALENTINE.

Such bounty should enrich.—Alas! for me,
Who, spite of all its granting, must be poor.

CLEVER (*entering*).

Friend Ruth, the dinner waits.—Friend Peter here!
And to the world, like thee, gone back again!
Then change of gear for me! Bold serving man,
Who would be other than his betters are!
No more, friend Obadiah—know me hence
For Master Clever, name and nature one!

SIR VALENTINE.

Have I but dreamt 'tis night, and is it day!
A masque is it I have been acting in,
And known it not? Can'st thou be both, yet one?
Is Ruth but Hero—Hero even Ruth?
Then welcome Hero for the sake of Ruth,
And Ruth more welcome yet for Hero's sake!
And is it so?—or does the fable end
In cold return to dull reality?

HERO.

No; in reality that's born of it
And is its fairer likeness!—real grown
What first was only seeming. I have become
The part, I lately play'd; the thing I was
Before, have ceas'd to be! Such virtue hath
The only show of virtue! For which change
Thy noble nature do I thank, altho'
Perhaps with more than prudent jealousy
Exacting; and precipitate, where patience
Might well have counsell'd pause. With Hero's form
Take Ruth's contentment and humility—
Their dress, whate'er your love would have it be!

But here is one unchang'd, nor needing change, [*To* HELEN.
Except where seeming goes for next to naught!
My Helen! thou art happy now!

HELEN.

I am!

WALSINGHAM.

And I, that scarce deserve my happiness!
But what shall make me misbeliever hence?
How could I doubt thee! Strong appearances
By stronger vouchers back'd, it was, that made me.
But that detected now—and these explain'd—
Thy virtue rises like a pyramid
I wonder aught could hide!—A life of trust
Shall for a season of misgiving pay thee!
Yet more I have to say—of that anon—
For guests are here you thought not of before,
On whom your feast that waits for us depends—
Marr'd, if disrelish'd,—made, if they're content!

THE END.

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WHITEFRIARS.

THE

LOVE-CHASE.

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,

AUTHOR OF "VIRGINIUS," "THE DAUGHTER,"
&c. &c.

Second Edition.

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MDCCCXXXVII.

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DEDICATED

TO

DANIEL GRANT, Esq.

OF

MANCHESTER,

BY HIS ATTACHED AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,

J. S. KNOWLES.

CHARACTERS.

Sir William Fondlove, an old Baronet	*Mr. Strickland.*
Waller, in love with Lydia	*Mr. Elton.*
Wildrake, a Sportsman	*Mr. Webster.*
Trueworth, a friend of Sir William	*Mr. Hemmings.*
Neville, Humphreys, } Friends to Waller	{ *Mr. Worrell.* *Mr. Hutchings.*
Lash	*Mr. Ross*
Chargewell, a Landlord	*Mr. Edwards.*
George, a Waiter	*Mr. Bishop.*
First Lawyer	*Mr. Ray.*
Widow Green	*Mrs. Glover.*
Constance, Daughter to Sir William Fondlove	*Mrs. Nisbett.*
Lydia, Lady's Maid to Widow Green	*Miss Vandenhoff.*
Alice, House-keeper to Master Waller	*Mrs. Tayleure.*
Phœbe, Maid to Constance	*Miss Wrighten.*
Amelia	*Miss Gallot.*
First Lady	*Mrs. Gallot.*

Scene—*London.*

THE LOVE CHASE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE LOBBY OF AN INN.

Enter CHARGEWELL, *hurriedly.*

CHARGEWELL.

WHAT, hoa there! Hoa, Sirrahs! More wine! Are the knaves asleep? Let not our guests cool, or we shall starve the till! Good waiting, more than viands and wine, doth help to make the Inn!—George! Richard!—Ralph! —Where are you? [*Enter* GEORGE.

GEORGE

Here am I, Sir.

CHARGEWELL.

Have they taken in more wine to that company?

GEORGE.

Yes, Sir.

CHARGEWELL.

That's right. Serve them as quick as they order! A fair company! I have seen them here before. Take care

they come again. A choice company! That Master Waller, I hear, is a fine spirit—leads the town. Pay him much duty. A deep purse, and easy strings!

GEORGE.

And there is another, Sir;—a capital gentleman, though from the country. A gentleman most learned in dogs and horses! He doth talk wondrous edification:—one Master Wildrake. I wish you could hear him, Sir.

CHARGEWELL.

Well, well!—attend to them. Let them not cool o'er the liquor, or their calls will grow slack. Keep feeding the fire while it blazes, and the blaze will continue. Look to it well!

GEORGE.

I will, Sir.

CHARGEWELL.

And be careful, above all, that you please Master Waller. He is a guest worth pleasing; he is a gentleman.—Free order, quick pay!

GEORGE.

And such, I'll dare be sworn, is the other. A man of mighty stores of knowledge—most learned in dogs and horses! Never was I so edified by the discourse of mortal man.

[*They go out severally*

SCENE II.—A ROOM.

MASTER WALLER, MASTER WILDRAKE, MASTER TRUEWORTH, MASTER NEVILLE, *and* MASTER HUMPHREYS, *sitting round a table.*

MASTER WALLER.

Well, Master Wildrake, speak you of the chase!
To hear you one doth feel the bounding steed;
You bring the hounds and game, and all to view—
All scudding to the jovial huntsman's cheer!
And yet I pity the poor crowned deer,
And always fancy 'tis by Fortune's spite,
That lordly head of his, he bears so high—
Like Virtue, stately in calamity,
And hunted by the human, worldly hound—
Is made to fly before the pack, that straight
Burst into song at prospect of his death.
You say their cry is harmony; and yet
The chorus scarce is music to my ear,
When I bethink me what it sounds to his;
Nor deem I sweet the note that rings the knell
Of the once merry forester!

NEVILLE.

The same things
Do please or pain, according to the thought
We take of them. Some smile at their own death,
Which most do shrink from, as a beast of prey

It kills to look upon. But you, who take
Such pity of the deer, whence follows it
You hunt more costly game?—the comely maid,
To wit, that waits on buxom Widow Green?

HUMPHREYS.

The comely maid!—Such term not half the sum
Of her rich beauty gives! Were rule to go
By loveliness, I know not in the court,
Or city, lady might not fitly serve
That lady serving-maid!

TRUEWORTH.

Come! your defence?
Why show you ruth where there's least argument,
Deny it where there's most? You will not plead?
Oh, Master Waller, where we use to hunt
We think the sport no crime.

HUMPHREYS.

I give you joy,
You prosper in your chase.

MASTER WALLER.

Not so! The maid
In simple honesty I must pronounce
A miracle of virtue, well as beauty.

NEVILLE.

And well do I believe you, Master Waller;
Those know I who have ventur'd gift and promise
But for a minute of her ear—the boon
Of a poor dozen words spoke through a chink—

And come off bootless, save the haughty scorn
That cast their bounties back to them again.

TRUEWORTH.

That warrants her what Master Waller speaks her.
Is she so very fair?

NEVILLE.

Yes, Master Trueworth;
And I believe indeed an honest maid;
But love's the coin to market with for love,
And that knows Master Waller. On pretence
Of sneaking kindness for gay Widow Green,
He visits her for sake of her fair maid!
To whom a glance or word avails to hint
His proper errand: and—as glimpses only
Do only serve to whet the wish to see—
Awakens interest to hear the tale
So stintingly that's told. I know his practice—
Luck to you, Master Waller! If you win,
You merit it, who take the way to win!

MASTER WALLER.

Good, Master Neville!

TRUEWORTH.

I should laugh to see
The poacher snar'd!—the maid, for mistress sought,
Turn out a wife.

NEVILLE.

How say you, Master Waller?
Things quite as strange have fallen!

MASTER WALLER.

Impossible!

TRUEWORTH.

Impossible! Most possible of things—
If thou'rt in love! Where merit lies itself,
What matters it to want the name, which, weighed,
Is not the worth of so much breath as it takes
To utter it! If, but from Nature's hand,
She is all you could expect of gentle blood,
Face, form, mien, speech; with these, what to belong
To lady more behoves—thoughts delicate,
Affections generous, and modesty—
Perfectionating, brightening crown of all!—
If she hath these—true titles to thy heart—
What doth she lack that's title to thy hand?
The name of lady, which is none of these,
But may belong without? Thou might'st do worse
Than marry her! Thou would'st, undoing her!
Yea, by my mother's name, a shameful act
Most shamefully performed!

MASTER WALLER—*starting up and drawing.*

Sir!

NEVILLE *and the others—interposing.*

Gentlemen!

TRUEWORTH.

All's right! Sit down!—I will not draw again.
A word with you: If—as a man—thou say'st,
Upon thy honour, I have spoken wrong,

I'll ask thy pardon!—though I never hold
Communion with thee more!

MASTER WALLER—*after a pause, putting up his sword.*

My sword is sheath'd!
Wilt let me take thy hand?

TRUEWORTH.

'Tis thine, good Sir,
And faster than before—A fault confessed,
Is a new virtue added to a man!
Yet let me own some blame was mine. A truth
May be too harshly told—but 'tis a theme
I am tender on—I had a sister, Sir——
You understand me!—'Twas my happiness
To own her once—I would forget her now!—
I have forgotten!—I know not if she lives!—
Things of such strain as we were speaking of,
Spite of myself, remind me of her!—So!——

NEVILLE.

Sit down! Let's have more wine.

WILDRAKE.

Not so, good Sirs.
Partaking of your hospitality,
I have overlook'd good friends I came to visit,
And who have late become sojourners here—
Old country friends and neighbours, and with whom
I e'en take up my quarters. Master Trueworth,
Bear witness for me.

TRUEWORTH.

It is even so.
Sir William Fondlove and his charming daughter.

WILDRAKE.

Ay, neighbour Constance. Charming, does he say?
Yes, neighbour Constance is a charming girl
To those that do not know her. If she plies me
As hard as was her custom in the country,
I should not wonder though, this very day,
I seek the home I quitted for a month! [*Aside.*
Good even, gentlemen.

HUMPHREYS.

Nay, if you go,
We all break up, and sally forth together.

MASTER WALLER.

Be it so—Your hand again, good Master Trueworth!
I am sorry I did pain you.

TRUEWORTH.

It is thine, Sir. [*They go out.*

SCENE III.—SIR WILLIAM FONDLOVE'S HOUSE.—A ROOM.

Enter SIR WILLIAM.

SIR WILLIAM.

At sixty-two, to be in leading-strings,
Is an old child—and with a daughter, too!

Her mother held me ne'er in check so strait
As she. I must not go but where she likes,
Nor see but whom she likes, do anything
But what she likes!—A slut, bare twenty-one!
Nor minces she commands!—A brigadier
More coolly doth not give his orders out
Than she! Her waiting-maid is aide-de-camp;
My steward adjutant; my lacqueys sergeants;
That bring me her high pleasure how I march
And counter-march—when I'm on duty—when
I'm off—when suits it not to tell it me
Herself—"Sir William, thus my mistress says!"
As saying it were enough—no will of mine
Consulted! I will marry. Must I serve,
Better a wife, my mistress, than a daughter!
And yet the vixen says, if I do marry,
I'll find she'll rule my wife as well as me!

Enter TRUEWORTH.

Ah, Master Trueworth! Welcome, Master Trueworth!

TRUEWORTH.

Thanks, Sir; I am glad to see you look so well!

SIR WILLIAM.

Ah, Master Trueworth, when one turns the hill,
'Tis rapid going down! We climb by steps;
By strides we reach the bottom. Look at me,
And guess my age.

TRUEWORTH.

Turned fifty.

SIR WILLIAM.

Ten years more!
How marvellously well I wear! I think
You would not flatter me!—But scan me close,
And pryingly, as one who seeks a thing
He means to find—What signs of age dost see?

TRUEWORTH.

None!

SIR WILLIAM.

None about the corners of the eyes?
Lines that diverge like to the spider's joists,
Whereon he builds his airy fortalice?
They call them crow's feet—has the ugly bird
Been perching there?—Eh?—Well?

TRUEWORTH.

There's something like,
But not what one must see, unless he's blind
Like steeple on a hill.

SIR WILLIAM—*after a pause.*

Your eyes are good!
I am certainly a wonder for my age;
I walk as well as ever! Do I stoop?

TRUEWORTH.

A plummet from your head would find your heel.

SIR WILLIAM.

It is my make—my make, good Master Trueworth;
I do not study it. Do you observe
The hollow in my back? That's natural.
As now I stand, so stood I when a child,

A rosy chubby boy!—I am youthful to
A miracle! My arm is firm as 'twas
At twenty. Feel it!

MASTER TRUEWORTH—*feeling Sir* WILLIAM's *arm.*

It is deal!

SIR WILLIAM.

Oak—oak
Isn't it, Master Trueworth? Thou hast known me
Ten years and upwards. Think'st my leg is shrunk?

TRUEWORTH.

No.

SIR WILLIAM.

No! not in the calf?

TRUEWORTH.

As big a calf
As ever.

SIR WILLIAM.

Thank you, thank you—I believe it!
When others waste, 'tis growing time with me!
I feel it, Master Trueworth! Vigour, Sir,
In every joint of me!—could run! could leap!
Why shouldn't I marry? Knife and fork I play
Better than many a boy of twenty-five—
Why shouldn't I marry? If they come to wine,
My brace of bottles can I carry home,
And ne'er a headache. Death! why shouldn't I marry?

TRUEWORTH.

I see in nature no impediment.

SIR WILLIAM.

Impediment? she's all appliances!—
And fortune's with me, too! The Widow Green
Gives hints to me. The pleasant Widow Green!
Whose fortieth year, instead of autumn, brings
A second Summer in. Odds bodikins,
How young she looks! What life is in her eyes!
What ease is in her gait! while, as she walks
Her waist, still tapering, takes it pliantly!
How lollingly she bears her head withal:
On this side now—now that! When enters she
A drawing room, what worlds of gracious things
Her courtesy says!—she sinks with such a sway,
Greeting on either hand the company,
Then slowly rises to her state again!
She is the empress of the card-table!
Her hand and arm!—Gods, did you see her deal—
With curv'd and pliant wrist dispense the pack,
Which, at the touch of her fair fingers fly!
How soft she speaks—how very soft! Her voice
Comes melting from her round, and swelling throat,
Reminding you of sweetest, mellowest things—
Plums, peaches, apricots and nectarines—
Whose bloom is poor to paint her cheeks and lips.
By Jove, I'll marry!

TRUEWORTH.

You forget, Sir William,
I do not know the lady.

SIR WILLIAM.

Great your loss.
By all the Gods I'll marry !—But my daughter
Must needs be married first. She rules my house ;
Would rule it still, and will not have me wed.
A clever, handsome, darling, forward minx !
When I became a widower, the reins
Her mother dropp'd she caught,—a hoyden girl ;
Nor since would e'er give up, howe'er I strove
To coax or catch them from her. One way still
Or t'other she would keep them—laugh, pout, plead ;
Now vanquish me with water, now with fire ;
Would box my face, and, ere I well could ope
My mouth to chide her, stop it with a kiss !
The monkey ! what a plague she's to me !—How
I love her ! how I love the Widow Green !

TRUEWORTH.

Then marry her !

SIR WILLIAM.

I tell thee, first of all
Must needs my daughter marry.—See I not
A hope of that ; she nought affects the sex:
Comes suitor after suitor—all in vain.
Fast as they bow she courtesies, and says "Nay !"
Or she, a woman, lacks a woman's heart,
Or hath a special taste which none can hit.

TRUEWORTH.

Or taste, perhaps, which is already hit.

SIR WILLIAM.

Eh!—how?

TRUEWORTH.

Remember you no country friend,
Companion of her walks—her squire to church,
Her beau whenever she went visiting—
Before she came to town?

SIR WILLIAM.

No!

TRUEWORTH.

None?—art sure?
No playmate when she was a girl?

SIR WILLIAM.

O! ay!
That Master Wildrake I did pray thee go
And wait for at the Inn, but had forgotten.
Is he come?

TRUEWORTH.

And in the house.—Some friends that met him,
As he alighted, laid strong hands upon him
And made him stop for dinner. We had else
Been earlier with you.

SIR WILLIAM.

Ha! I am glad he is come.

TRUEWORTH.

She may be smit with him.

SIR WILLIAM.

As cat with dog!

TRUEWORTH.

He heard her voice as we did mount the stairs,
And darted straight to join her.

SIR WILLIAM.

You shall see
What wondrous calm and harmony take place,
When fire meets gunpowder!

CONSTANCE—*without.*

Who sent for you?
What made you come?

WILDRAKE—*without.*

To see the town, not you!—
A kiss!

CONSTANCE.

I vow I'll not.

WILDRAKE.

I swear you shall.

CONSTANCE.

A saucy cub! I vow, I had as lieve
Your whipper-in had kiss'd me.

SIR WILLIAM.

Do you hear?

TRUEWORTH.

I do. Most pleasing discords!

Enter CONSTANCE *and* WILDRAKE.

CONSTANCE.

Father, speak
To neighbour Wildrake.

SIR WILLIAM.

Very glad to see him!

WILDRAKE.

I thank you, good Sir William! Give you joy
Of your good looks!

CONSTANCE.

What, Phœbe!—Phœbe!—Phœbe!

SIR WILLIAM.

What want'st thou with thy lap-dog?

CONSTANCE.

Only, Sir,
To welcome neighbour Wildrake! What a figure
To shew himself in town!

SIR WILLIAM.

Wilt hold thy peace?

CONSTANCE.

Yes; if you'll lesson me to hold my laughter.
Wildrake!

WILDRAKE.

Well?

CONSTANCE.

Let me walk thee in the Park—
How they would stare at thee!

SIR WILLIAM.

Wilt ne'er give o'er?

WILDRAKE.

Nay, let her have her way—I heed her not!
Though to more courteous welcome I have right;
Although I am neighbour Wildrake! Reason is reason!

CONSTANCE.

And right is right! so welcome, neighbour Wildrake,
I am very, very, very glad to see you!
Come, for a quarter of an hour we'll e'en
Agree together!—How do your horses, neighbour?

WILDRAKE.

Pshaw!

CONSTANCE.

And your dogs?

WILDRAKE.

Pshaw!

CONSTANCE.

Whipper-in and huntsman?

SIR WILLIAM.

Converse of things thou know'st to talk about!

CONSTANCE.

And keep him silent, father, when I know
He cannot talk of any other things?
How does thy hunter? What a sorry trick
He played thee t'other day, to balk his leap
And throw thee, neighbour! Did he balk the leap?
Confess! You sportsmen never are to blame!
Say you are fowlers, 'tis your dog's in fault;
Say you are anglers, 'tis your tackle's wrong;
Say you are hunters, why the honest horse
That bears your weight, must bear your blunders too!
Why, whither go you?

WILDRAKE.

Any where from thee.

CONSTANCE.

With me you mean.

WILDRAKE.

I mean it not.

CONSTANCE.

You do!
I'll give you fifty reasons for't—and first,
Where you go, neighbour, I'll go!

(*They go out*—WILDRAKE *pettishly*—CONSTANCE *laughing*.)

SIR WILLIAM.

Do you mark?
Much love is there!

TRUEWORTH.

Indeed, a heap, or none.
I'd wager on the heap!

SIR WILLIAM.

Ay!—Do you think
These discords, as in the musicians' art,
Are subtle servitors to harmony?
That all this war's for peace? This wrangling but
A masquerade where love his roguish face
Conceals beneath an ugly visor!—Well?

TRUEWORTH.

Your guess and my conceit are not a mile
Apart. Unlike to other common flowers,
The flower of love shows various in the bud,
'Twill look a thistle, and 'twill blow a rose!
And with your leave I'll put it to the test;
Affect myself, for thy fair daughter, love—

Make him my confidant—dilate to him
Upon the graces of her heart and mind,
Feature and form—that well may comment bear—
Till—like the practised connoisseur, who finds
A gem of art out in a household picture
The unskill'd owner held so cheap he grudg'd
Renewal of the chipp'd and tarnished frame,
But values now as priceless—I arouse him
Into a quick sense of the worth of that
Whose merit hitherto, from lack of skill,
Or dulling habit of acquaintanceship,
He has not been awake to.

CONSTANCE—*without.*

Neighbour Wildrake!

SIR WILLIAM.

Hither they come. I fancy well thy game!
O to be free to marry Widow Green!
I'll call her hence anon—then ply him well.

[SIR WILLIAM *goes out.*

WILDRAKE—*without.*

Nay, neighbour Constance!

TRUEWORTH.

He is high in storm.—(*Enter* WILDRAKE *and* CONSTANCE.)

WILDRAKE.

To Lincolnshire, I tell thee.

CONSTANCE.

Lincolnshire!
What, prithee, takes thee off to Lincolnshire?

WILDRAKE.

Too great delight in thy fair company.

TRUEWORTH.

Nay, Master Wildrake, why away so soon?
You are scarce a day in town!—Extremes like this,
And starts of purpose, are the signs 'tis love,
Though immatured as yet. [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE.

He's long enough
In town! What should he here? He's lost in town:
No man is he for concerts, balls or routs!
No game he knows at cards, save rare Pope Joan!
He ne'er could master dance beyond a jig;
And as for music, nothing to compare
To the melodious yelping of a hound
Except the braying of his huntsman's horn!
Ask *him* to stay in town!

SIR WILLIAM—*without.*

Hoa, Constance!

CONSTANCE.

Sir!—
Neighbour, a pleasant ride to Lincolnshire!
Good bye!

SIR WILLIAM—*without.*

Why, Constance!

CONSTANCE.

Coming, Sir! Shake hands!
Neighbour, good bye! Don't look so wo-begone;
'Tis but a two-days' ride, and thou wilt see

Rover, and Spot, and Nettle, and the rest
Of thy dear country friends!

SIR WILLIAM—*without.*

Constance! I say.

CONSTANCE.

Anon!—Commend me to the gentle souls,
And pat them for me!—Will you, neighbour Wildrake?

SIR WILLIAM—*without.*

Why, Constance! Constance!

CONSTANCE.

In a moment, Sir!
Good bye!—I'd cry, dear neighbour, if I could!
Good bye!—A pleasant day when next you hunt!
And, prithee, mind thy horse don't balk his leap!
Good bye—and, after dinner, drink my health!
"A bumper, Sirs, to neighbour Constance!"—Do!—
And give it with a speech, wherein unfold
My many graces, more accomplishments,
And virtues topping either—in a word,
How I'm the fairest, kindest, best of neighbours!

[*They go out severally.*—TRUEWORTH *trying to pacify* WILDRAKE—CONSTANCE *laughing.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN SIR WILLIAM'S HOUSE.

Enter TRUEWORTH *and* WILDRAKE.

WILDRAKE.

NAY, master Trueworth, I must needs begone!
She treats me worse and worse! I am a stock,
That words have none to pay her. For her sake
I quit the town to-day. I like a jest,
But hers are jests past bearing. I am her butt
She nothing does but practise on! A plague!—
Fly her shafts ever your way?

TRUEWORTH.

Would they did!

WILDRAKE.

Art mad?—or wishest she should drive thee so?

TRUEWORTH.

Thou knowest her not.

WILDRAKE.

I know not neighbour Constance?
Then know I not myself, or any thing
Which as myself I know!

TRUEWORTH.

Heigh ho!

WILDRAKE.

Heigh ho!
Why what a burden that for a man's song!
'Twould fit a maiden that was sick for love.
Heigh ho! Come ride with me to Lincolnshire,
And turn thy "heigh ho!" into "hilly ho!"

TRUEWORTH.

Nay, rather tarry thou in town with me.
Men sometimes find a friend's hand of avail
When useless proves their own. Wilt lend me thine?

WILDRAKE.

Or may my horse break down in a steeple chase!

TRUEWORTH.

A steeple chase What made thee think of that?
I'm for the steeple—not to ride a race,
Only to get there!—nor alone in sooth;
But in fair company!

WILDRAKE.

Thou'rt not in love!

TRUEWORTH.

Heigh ho!

WILDRAKE.

Thou wouldst not marry!

TRUEWORTH.

With your help.

WILDRAKE.

And whom, I prithee?

TRUEWORTH.

Gentle mistress Constance!

WILDRAKE.

What!—neighbour Constance?—Never did I dream
That mortal man would fall in love with her. [*Aside.*
In love with neighbour Constance!—I feel strange
At thought that she should marry!—*(Aside)* Go to church
With neighbour Constance! That's a steeple chase
I never thought of. I feel very strange!
What seest in neighbour Constance?

TRUEWORTH.

Lovers' eyes
See with a vision proper to themselves,
Yet thousand eyes will vouch what mine affirm.
First, then, I see in her the mould express
Of woman—stature, feature, body, limb—
Breathing the gentle sex we value most,
When most 'tis at antipodes with ours!

WILDRAKE.

You mean that neighbour Constance is a woman.
Why, yes; she is a woman certainly.

TRUEWORTH.

So much for person. Now for her complexion.
What shall we liken to her dainty skin?—
Her arm for instance?——

WILDRAKE.

Snow will match it.

TRUEWORTH.

Snow!—
It is her arm without the smoothness on't;
Then is not snow transparent. 'Twill not do.

WILDRAKE.

A pearl's transparent!

TRUEWORTH.

So it is, but yet
Yields not elastic to the thrilled touch!
I know not what to liken to her arm
Except its beauteous fellow! O, to be
The chosen friend of two such neighbours!

WILDRAKE.

Would
His tongue would make a halt. He makes too free
With neighbour Constance! Can't he let her arms
Alone! I trust their chosen friend
Will ne'er be he! I'm vex'd. [*Aside.*

TRUEWORTH.

But graceful things
Grow doubly graceful in the graceful use!
Hast mark'd her ever walk the drawing-room?

WILDRAKE—*snappishly.*

No.

TRUEWORTH.

No! Why, where have been your eyes?

WILDRAKE.

In my head!
But I begin to doubt if open yet. [*Aside.*

TRUEWORTH.

Yet that's a trifle to the dance; down which
She floats as though she were a form of air;
The ground feels not her foot, or tells not on't;

Her movements are the painting of the strain,
Its swell, its fall, its mirth, its tenderness!
Then is she fifty Constances! each moment
Another one, and each, except its fellow,
Without a peer! You have danced with her?

WILDRAKE.

I hate
To dance! I can't endure to dance!—Of course
You have danced with her?

TRUEWORTH.

I have.

WILDRAKE.

You have?

TRUEWORTH.

I have.

WILDRAKE.

I do abominate to dance!—Could carve
Fiddlers and company! A dancing man
To me was ever like a dancing dog!
Save less to be endured!—Ne'er saw I one
But I bethought me of the master's whip.

TRUEWORTH.

A man might bear the whip to dance with her!

WILDRAKE.

Not if I had the laying of it on!

TRUEWORTH.

Well; let that pass. The lady is the theme.

WILDRAKE.

Yes; make an end of it!—I'm sick of it. [*Aside.*

TRUEWORTH.

How well she plays the harpsichord and harp!
How well she sings to them! Whoe'er would prove
The power of song, should hear thy neighbour sing,
Especially a love song!

WILDRAKE.

Does she sing
Such songs to thee?

TRUEWORTH.

O yes, and constantly.
For such I ever ask her.

WILDRAKE.

Forward minx! [*Aside.*
Maids should not sing love songs to gentlemen!
Think'st neighbour Constance is a girl to love?

TRUEWORTH.

A girl to love?—Ay, and with all her soul!

WILDRAKE.

How know you that?

TRUEWORTH.

I have studied close the sex.

WILDRAKE.

You town-rakes are the devil for the sex! [*Aside.*

TRUEWORTH.

Not your most sensitive and serious maid
I'd always take for deep impressions. Mind
The adage of the bow. The pensive brow
I have oft seen bright in wedlock, and anon
O'ercast in widowhood; then bright again,

Ere half the season of the weeds was out.
While, in the airy one, I've known one cloud
Forerunner of a gloom that ne'er clear'd up—
So would it prove with neighbour Constance. Not
On superficial ground she'll ever love;
But once she does, the odds are ten to one
Her first love is her last!

WILDRAKE.

I wish I ne'er
Had come to town! I was a happy man
Among my dogs and horses (*aside*). Hast thou broke
Thy passion to her?

TRUEWORTH.

Never.

WILDRAKE.

Never?

TRUEWORTH.

No.
I hoped you'd act my proxy there.

WILDRAKE.

I thank you.

TRUEWORTH.

I knew 'twould be a pleasure to you.

WILDRAKE.

Yes;
A pleasure!—an unutterable pleasure!

TRUEWORTH.

Thank you! You make my happiness your own.

WILDRAKE.

I do.

TRUEWORTH.

I see you do. Dear Master Wildrake!
O, what a blessing is a friend in need,
You'll go and court your neighbour for me?

WILDRAKE.

Yes.

TRUEWORTH.

And says she "nay" at first, you'll press again.

WILDRAKE.

Ay, and again!

TRUEWORTH.

There's one thing I mistrust—yea, most mistrust,
That of my poor deserts you'll make too much.

WILDRAKE.

Fear any thing but that.

TRUEWORTH.

'Twere better far
You slightly spoke of them.

WILDRAKE.

You think so?

TRUEWORTH.

Yes,
Or rather did not speak of them at all.

WILDRAKE.

You think so?

TRUEWORTH.

Yes.

WILDRAKE.

Then I'll not say a word
About them.

TRUEWORTH.

Thank you! A judicious friend
Is better than a zealous—You are both!
I see you'll plead my cause as 'twere your own;
Then stay in town, and win your neighbour for me
Make me the envy of a score of men
That die for her as I do.—Make her mine,
And when the last "Amen!" declares complete
The mystic tying of the holy knot,
And 'fore the priest a blushing wife she stands,
Be thine the right to claim the second kiss
She pays for change from maidenhood to wifehood. [*Goes out.*

WILDRAKE.

Take that thyself! The first be mine, or none.
A man in love with neighbour Constance!—Never
Dream'd I that such a thing could come to pass!
Such person, such endowments, such a soul!
I never thought to ask myself before
If she were man or woman! Suitors, too,
Dying for her! I'll e'en make one among 'em!
Woo her to go to church along with him,
And for my pains the privilege to take
The second kiss! I'll take the second kiss,
And first one too—and last! No man shall touch
Her lips but me. I'll massacre the man
That looks upon her! Yet what chance have I

With lovers of the town, whose study 'tis
To please your lady belles!—who dress, walk, talk,
To hit their tastes—what chance, a country squire
Like me? Yet your true fair, I have heard, prefers
The man before his coat at any time,
And such a one must neighbour Constance be.
I'll show a limb with any of them! Silks
I'll wear, nor keep my legs in cases more.
I'll learn to dance town-dances, and frequent
Their concerts! Die away at melting strains,
Or seem to do so—far the easier thing,
And as effective quite; leave nought undone
To conquer neighbour Constance.

Enter LASH.

LASH.

Sir.

WILDRAKE.

Well, sir.

LASH.

So please you, sir, your horse is at the door.

WILDRAKE.

Unsaddle him again and put him up.
And, hark you, get a tailor for me, sir—
The rarest can be found.

LASH.

The man's below, sir,
That owns the mare your worship thought to buy.

WILDRAKE.

Tell him I do not want her, sir.

LASH.

I vow,
You will not find her like in Lincolnshire.

WILDRAKE.

Go to! She's spavin'd.

LASH.

Sir!

WILDRAKE.

Touch'd in the wind.

LASH.

I trust my master be not touch'd in the head! [*Aside.*
I vow, a faultless beast!

WILDRAKE.

I want her not,
And that's your answer—Go to the hosier's, sir,
And bid him send me samples of his gear,
Of twenty different kinds.

LASH.

I will, sir.——Sir!

WILDRAKE.

Well, sir.

LASH.

Squire Brush's huntsman's here, and says
His master's kennel is for sale.

WILDRAKE.

The dogs
Are only fit for hanging!

LASH.

Finer bred—

WILDRAKE.

Sirrah, if more to me thou talk'st of dogs
Horses, or aught that to thy craft belongs,
Thou may'st go hang for me!—A cordwainer
Go fetch me straight—the choicest in the town.
Away, sir! Do thy errands smart and well
As thou canst crack thy whip!—(LASH *goes out.*)—Dear neighbour Constance,
I'll give up horses, dogs, and all for thee! [*Goes out.*

SCENE II.

Enter WIDOW GREEN *and* LYDIA.

WIDOW GREEN.

Lydia, my gloves. If Master Waller calls,
I shall be in at three; and say the same
To old Sir William Fondlove. Tarry yet!—
What progress think you make I in the heart
Of fair young Master Waller? Gods, my girl,
It is a heart to win and man as well!
How speed I, think you? Didst, as I desired,
Detain him in my absence when he call'd,
And, without seeming, sound him touching me?

LYDIA.

Yes.

WIDOW GREE

And affects he me, or not? How guess you?
What said he of me? Look'd he balk'd, or not,

To find me not at home? Inquired he, when
I would be back, as much he longed to see me?
What did he—said he? Come!—Is he in love,
Or like to fall into it? Goes well my game,
Or shall I have my labour for my pains?

LYDIA.

I think he is in love.—O poor evasion!
O to love truth, and yet not dare to speak it! [*Aside.*

WIDOW GREEN.

You think he is in love. I'm sure of it,
As well have ask'd you has he eyes and ears,
And brain and heart to use them? Maids do throw
Trick after trick away, but widows know
To play their cards! How am I looking, Lydia?

LYDIA.

E'en as you ever look.

WIDOW GREEN.

Handsome, my girl?
Eh? Clear in my complexion? Eh?—brimful
Of spirits? not too much of me, nor yet
Too little?—Eh?—A woman worth a man?
Look at me, Lydia! Would you credit, girl,
I was a scare-crow before marriage?

LYDIA.

Nay!—

WIDOW GREEN.

Girl, but I tell thee "yea." That gown of thine—
And thou art slender—would have hung about me!
There's something of me now! good sooth, enough!

Lydia, I'm quite contented with myself;
I'm just the thing, methinks, a widow should be.
So Master Waller, you believe, affects me?
But, Lydia, not enough to hook the fish;
To prove the angler's skill, it must be caught;
And lovers, Lydia, like the angler's prey—
Which when he draws it near the landing place
Takes warning and runs out the slender line,
And with a spring perchance jerks off the hold—
When we do fish for them, and hook, and think
They are all but in the creel, will make the dart
That sets them free to roam the flood again!

LYDIA.

Is't so?

WIDOW GREEN.

Thou'lt find it so, or better luck
Than many another maid! Now mark me, Lydia,
Sir William Fondlove fancies me. 'Tis well!
I do not fancy him! What should I do
With an old man?—Attend upon the gout,
Or the rheumatics! Wrap me in the cloud
Of a darken'd chamber—'stead of shining out,
The sun of balls, and routs, and gala days!
But he affects me, Lydia; so he may!
Now take a lesson from me—Jealousy
Had better go with open, naked breast,
Than pin or button with a gem—Less plague,
The plague spot; that doth speedy make an end
One way or t'other, girl—Yet, never love

Was warm without a spice of jealousy.
Thy lesson now—Sir William Fondlove's rich,
And riches, though they're paste, yet being many,
The jewel love we often cast away for.
I use him but for Master Waller's sake.
Dost like my policy?

LYDIA.

You will not chide me?

WIDOW GREEN.

Nay, Lydia, I do like to hear thy thoughts,
They are such novel things—plants that do thrive
With country air! I marvel still they flower,
And thou so long in town! Speak freely, girl!

LYDIA.

I cannot think love thrives by artifice,
Or can disguise its mood, and show its face.
I would not hide one portion of my heart
Where I did give it and did feel 'twas right,
Nor feign a wish, to mask a wish that was,
Howe'er to keep it. For no cause except
Myself would I be lov'd. What were't to me,
My lover valued me the more, the more
He saw me comely in another's eyes,
When his alone the vision I would show,
Becoming to? I have sought the reason oft,
They paint Love as a child, and still have thought,
It was because true love, like infancy,
Frank, trusting, unobservant of its mood,
Doth show its wish at once, and means no more!

WIDOW GREEN.

Thou'lt find out better when thy time doth come.
Now would'st believe I love not Master Waller?
I never knew what love was, Lydia;
That is, as your romancers have it. First,
I married for a fortune. Having that,
And being freed from him that brought it me,
I marry now, to please my vanity,
A man that is the fashion. O the delight
Of a sensation, and yourself the cause!
To note the stir of eyes, and ears, and tongues,
When they do usher Mistress Waller in,
Late Widow Green, her hand upon the arm
Of her young handsome husband!—How my fan
Will be in requisition—I do feel
My heart begin to flutter now—my blood
To mount into my cheek! My honey-moon
Will be a month of triumphs!—"Mistress Waller!"
That name, for which a score of damsels sigh,
And but the widow had the wit to win!
Why, it will be the talk of East and West,
And North and South!—The children loved the man,
And lost him so—I liked, but there I stopp'd;
For what is it to love, but mind and heart
And soul upon another to depend?
Depend upon another!—Nothing be
But what another wills!—Give up the rights
Of mine own brain and heart!—I thank my stars
I never came to that extremity! [*Goes out.*

LYDIA.

She never loved, indeed!—She knows not love,
Except what's told of it!—She never felt it.
To stem a torrent, easy, looking at it;
But once you venture in, you nothing know
Except the speed with which you're borne away,
Howe'er you strive to check it. She suspects not
Her maid, not she, brings Master Waller hither.
Nor dare I undeceive her. Well might she say
Her young and handsome husband! Yet his face
And person are the least of him, and vanish
When shines his soul out through his open eye!
He all but says he loves me!—His respect
Has vanquish'd me! He looks the will to speak
His passion, and the fear that ties his tongue—
The fear?—He loves not honestly!—and yet
I'll swear he loves!—I'll swear he honours me!
It is but my condition is a bar,
Denies him give me all. But knew he me
As I do know myself!—Whate'er his purpose,
When next we speak, he shall declare it to me. [*Goes out.*

SCENE III.—SIR WILLIAM FONDLOVE'S.

Enter CONSTANCE, *dressed for riding, and* PHŒBE.

CONSTANCE.

Well, Phœbe, would you know me? Are those locks
That cluster on my forehead and my cheek,

Sufficient mask? Show I what I would seem,
A lady for the chase? My darken'd brows
And heighten'd colour, foreign to my face,
Do they my face pass off for stranger too?
What think you?

PHŒBE.

That he'll ne'er discover you

CONSTANCE.

Then send him to me—say a lady wants
To speak with him—unless indeed it be
A man in lady's gear—I look so bold
And speak so gruff! Away! (PHŒBE *goes out.*) That I am glad
He stays in town, I own; but if I am,
'Tis only for the tricks I'll play upon him;
And now begin—persuading him his fame
Hath made me fancy him, and brought me hither
On visit to his worship. Soft! his foot!
This he?—Why, what has metamorphosed him,
And changed my sportsman to fine gentleman?
Well he becomes his clothes!—But check my wonder,
Lest I forget myself—Why, what an air
The fellow hath!—A man to set a cap at!

Enter WILDRAKE.

WILDRAKE.

Kind lady, I attend your fair commands.

CONSTANCE.

My veiled face denies me justice, sir,
Else would you see a maiden's blushing cheek
Do penance for her forwardness, too late
I own repented of. Yet if 'tis true,

By our own hearts of others we may judge,
Mine in no peril lies that's shown to you,
Whose heart I'm sure is noble. Worthy sir,
Souls attract souls, when they're of kindred vein.
The life that you love, I love. Well I know,
'Mongst those who breast the feats of the bold chase,
You stand without a peer; and for myself
I dare avow 'mong such, none follows them
With heartier glee than I do.

WILDRAKE.

Churl were he
That would gainsay you, madam!

CONSTANCE—*courtesying.*

What delight
To back the flying steed, that challenges
The wind for speed!—seems native more of air
Than earth!—whose burden only lends him fire!—
Whose soul, in his task, turns labour into sport!
Who makes your pastime his! I sit him now!
He takes away my breath!—He makes me reel!
I touch not earth—I see not—hear not—All
Is ecstacy of motion!

WILDRAKE.

You are used,
I see, to the chase.

CONSTANCE.

I am, Sir! Then the leap,
To see the saucy barrier, and know
The mettle that can clear it! Then your time
To prove you master of the manage. Now

You keep him well together for a space,
Both horse and rider braced as you were one,
Scanning the distance—then you give him rein,
And let him fly at it, and o'er he goes
Light as a bird on wing.

WILDRAKE.

'Twere a bold leap,
I see, that turn'd you, madam.

CONSTANCE—*courtesying.*

Sir, you're good!
And then the hounds, sir! Nothing I admire
Beyond the running of the well-train'd pack.
The training's every thing! Keen on the scent!
At fault none losing heart!—but all at work!
None leaving his task to another!—answering
The watchful huntsman's caution, check, or cheer,
As steed his rider's rein! Away they go!
How close they keep together!—What a pack!
Nor turn nor ditch nor stream divides them—as
They moved with one intelligence, act, will!
And then the concert they keep up!—enough
To make one tenant of the merry-wood,
To list their jocund music!

WILDRAKE.

You describe
The huntsman's pastime to the life!

CONSTANCE.

I love it!
To wood and glen, hamlet and town, it is

A laughing holiday!—Not a hill-top
But's then alive!—Footmen with horsemen vie,
All earth's astir, roused with the revelry
Of vigour, health, and joy!—Cheer awakes cheer,
While Echo's mimic tongue, that never tires,
Keeps up the hearty din! Each face is then
Its neighbour's glass—where gladness sees itself,
And, at the bright reflection, grows more glad!
Breaks into tenfold mirth!—laughs like a child!
Would make a gift of its heart, it is so free!
Would scarce accept a kingdom, 'tis so rich!
Shakes hands with all, and vows it never knew
That life was life before!

WILDRAKE.

Nay, every way
You do fair justice, lady, to the chase;
But fancies change.

CONSTANCE.

Such fancy is not mine.

WILDRAKE.

I would it were not mine, for your fair sake.
I have quite given o'er the chase.

CONSTANCE.

You say not so!

WILDRAKE.

Forsworn, indeed, the sportsman's life, and grown,
As you may partly see, town gentleman.
I care not now to mount a steed, unless

To amble 'long the street; no paces mind,
Except my own, to walk the drawing-room,
Or in the ball-room to come off with grace;
No leap for me, to match the light coupé;
No music like the violin and harp,
To which the huntsman's dog and horn I find
Are somewhat coarse and homely minstrelsy:
Then fields of ill-dress'd rustics, you'll confess,
Are well exchanged for rooms of beaux and belles;
In short, I've ta'en another thought of life—
Become another man!

CONSTANCE.

The cause, I pray?

WILDRAKE.

The cause of causes, lady.

CONSTANCE.

He's in love! [*Aside.*

WILDRAKE.

To you, of women, I would name it last;
Yet your frank bearing merits like return:
I that did hunt the game, am caught myself
In chase I never dream'd of! [*Goes out.*

CONSTANCE.

He is in love!
Wildrake's in love! 'Tis that keeps him in town,
Turns him from sportsman to town-gentleman.
I never dream'd that he could be in love!
In love with whom?—I'll find the vixen out!

What right has she to set her cap at him?
I warrant me, a forward artful minx!
I hate him worse than ever.—I'll do all
I can to spoil the match. He'll never marry—
Sure he will never marry! He will have
More sense than that! My back doth ope and shut—
My temples throb and shoot—I am cold and hot!
Were he to marry, there would be an end
To neighbour Constance—neighbour Wildrake—why,
I should not know myself! [*Enter* TRUEWORTH.
Dear Master Trueworth,
What think you?—Neighbour Wildrake is in love!
In love!—would you believe it, master Trueworth?
Ne'er heed my dress and looks, but answer me.
Know'st thou of any lady he has seen
That's like to cozen him?

TRUEWORTH.

I am not sure—
We talk'd to-day about the Widow Green!

CONSTANCE.

Her that my father fancies.—Let him wed her!
Marry her to-morrow—if he will, to-night.
I can't spare neighbour Wildrake—neighbour Wildrake!
Although I would not marry him myself,
I could not bear that other married him!
Go to my father—'tis a proper match!
He has my leave! He's welcome to bring home
The Widow Green. I'll give up house and all!

She would be mad to marry neighbour Wildrake:
He would wear out her patience—plague her to death,
As he does me.—She must not marry him! [*They go out.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN WIDOW GREEN'S.

Enter MASTER WALLER, *following* LYDIA.

MASTER WALLER.

BUT thou shalt hear me, gentle Lydia.
Sweet maiden, thou art frighten'd at thyself!
Thy own perfections 'tis that talk to thee.
Thy beauty rich!—thy richer grace!—thy mind,
More rich again than that, though richest each!
Except for these, I had no tongue for thee,
Eyes for thee!—ears!—had never follow'd thee!—
Had never loved thee, Lydia!—Hear me!——

LYDIA.

Love
Should seek its match.—No match am I for thee.

MASTER WALLER.

Right! Love should seek its match; and that is, love
Or nothing! Station—fortune—find their match
In things resembling them. They are not love!
Comes love (that subtle essence, without which
Life were but leaden dulness!—weariness!
A plodding trudger on a heavy road!)
Comes it of title deeds which fools may boast?
Or coffers vilest hands may hold the keys of?

Or that ethereal lamp that lights the eyes
To shed their sparkling lustre o'er the face,
Gives to the velvet skin its blushing glow,
And burns as bright beneath the peasant's roof
As roof of palaced prince? Yes! Love should seek
Its match—then give my love its match in thine,
Its match which in thy gentle breast doth lodge
So rich—so earthly, heavenly fair and rich,
As monarchs have no thought of on their thrones,
Which kingdoms do bear up.

LYDIA.

Wast thou a monarch,
Me wouldst thou make thy queen?

MASTER WALLER.

I would!

LYDIA.

What!—Pass
A princess by for me?

MASTER WALLER.

I would.

LYDIA.

Suppose
Thy subjects would prevent thee?

MASTER WALLER.

Then, in spite
Of them!

LYDIA.

Suppose they were too strong for thee?

MASTER WALLER.

Why then, I'd give them up my throne—content
With that thou'dst yield me in thy gentle breast

LYDIA.

Can subjects do what monarchs do?

MASTER WALLER.

Far more!
Far less!

LYDIA.

Among those things, were more their power,
Is marriage one?

MASTER WALLER.

Yes.

LYDIA.

And no part of love,
You say, is rank or wealth?

MASTER WALLER.

No part of love.

LYDIA.

Is marriage part of love?

MASTER WALLER.

At times it is,
At times is not. Men love and marry—love
And marry not.

LYDIA.

Then, have they not the power;
So must they hapless part with those they love.

MASTER WALLER.

O no! not part! How could they love and part?

LYDIA.

How could they love not part, not free to wed?

MASTER WALLER.

Alone in marriage doth not union lie!

LYDIA.

Alone where hands are free!—O yes—alone!
Love that is love, bestoweth all it can!
It is protection, if 'tis anything,
Which nothing in its object leaves exposed
Its care can shelter.—Love that's free to wed,
Not wedding, doth profane the name of love,
Which is, on high authority to Earth's,
For Heaven did sit approving at its feast,
A holy thing!—Why make you love to me?
Women whose hearts are free, by nature tender,
Their fancies hit by those they are besought by,
Do first impressions quickly—deeply take;
And, balk'd in their election, have been known
To droop a whole life through! Gain for a maid,
A broken heart!—to barter her young love,
And find she chang'd it for a counterfeit!

MASTER WALLER.

If there is truth in man, I love thee!—Hear me!
In wedlock, families claim property,
Old notions, which we needs must humour often,
Bar us to wed where we are forc'd to love!
Thou hear'st?

LYDIA.

I do.

MASTER WALLER.

My family is proud;
Our ancestor whose arms we bear, did win
An earldom by his deeds. 'Tis not enough
I please myself!—I must please others, who
Desert in wealth and station only see.
Thou hear'st?

LYDIA.

I do.

MASTER WALLER

I cannot marry thee,
And must I lose thee?—Do not turn away!
Without the altar I can honour thee!
Can cherish thee, nor swear it to the priest;
For more than life I love thee!

LYDIA.

Say thou hat'st me,
And I'll believe thee.—Wherein differs love
From hate, to do the work of hate—destroy?
Thy ancestor won title by his deeds!
Was one of them to teach an honest maid
The deed of sin—first steal her love, and then
Her virtue? If thy family is proud,
Mine, Sir, is worthy! if we are poor, the lack
Of riches, Sir, is not the lack of shame!
That I should act a part, would raise a blush,
Nor fear to burn an honest brother's cheek!
Thou wouldst share a throne with me!—Thou wouldst rob me of

A throne!—reduce me from dominion to
Base vassalage!—pull off my crown for me,
And give my forehead in its place a brand!
You have insulted me.—To show you, Sir,
The heart you make so light of you are beloved—
But she that tells you so, tells you beside
She ne'er beholds you more! [*Goes out.*

MASTER WALLER.

Stay, Lydia!—No!—
'Tis vain! She is in virtue resolute,
As she is bland and tender in affection.
She is a miracle, beholding which
Wonder doth grow on wonder!—What a maid!
No mood but doth become her—yea adorn her.
She turns unsightly anger into beauty!
Sour scorn grows sweetness, touching her sweet lips!
And indignation, lighting on her brow,
Transforms to brightness, as the cloud to gold
That overhangs the sun! I love her!—Ay!
And all the throes of serious passion feel
At thought of losing her!—so my light love,
Which but her person did at first affect,
Her soul has metamorphos'd—made a thing
Of solid thoughts and wishes—I must have her!

Enter WIDOW GREEN—*unnoticed by* WALLER, *who continues abstracted.*

WIDOW GREEN.

What!—Master Waller and contemplative!
Presumptive proof of love! Of me he thinks!

Revolves the point "to be or not to be!"
"To be!" by all the triumphs of my sex!
There was a sigh! My life upon't, that sigh
If construed would translate "Dear Widow Green!"

MASTER WALLER.

Enchanting woman!

WIDOW GREEN.

That is I!—most deep
Abstraction, sure concomitant of love.
Now could I see his busy fancy's painting,
How should I blush to gaze upon myself.

MASTER WALLER.

The matchless form of woman! The choice culling
Of the aspiring artist, whose ambition
Robs Nature to out-do her—the perfections
Of her rare various workmanship combines
To aggrandize his art at Nature's cost,
And make a paragon!

WIDOW GREEN.

Gods! how he draws me!
Soon as he sees me, at my feet he falls!
Good Master Waller!

MASTER WALLER.

Ha! The Widow Green!

WIDOW GREEN.

He is confounded!—So am I. O dear!
How catching is emotion.—He can't speak!
O beautiful confusion! Amiable
Excess of modesty with passion struggling!

Now comes he to declare himself, but wants
The courage.—I will help him.—Master Waller!

Enter SIR WILLIAM FONDLOVE.

SIR WILLIAM FONDLOVE.

Dear Widow Green!

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir William Fondlove!

MASTER WALLER.

Thank
My lucky stars! [*Aside.*

WIDOW GREEN.

I would he had the gout,
And kept his room! (*aside.*)—You're welcome, dear Sir William!
'Tis very, very kind of you to call.
Sir William Fondlove—Master Waller. Pray
Be seated, gentlemen.—He shall requite me
For his untimely visit. Though the nail
Be driven home, it may the clinching yet
To make the hold complete! For that I'll use him. [*Aside.*
You are looking monstrous well, Sir William! and
No wonder. You're a mine of happy spirits!
Some women talk of such and such a style
Of features in a man.—Give me good humour;
That lights the homeliest visage up with beauty,
And makes the face, where beauty is already,
Quite irresistible!

SIR WILLIAM.

That's hitting hard. [*Aside.*

Dear Widow Green, don't say so! On my life
You flatter me.—You almost make me blush.

WIDOW GREEN.

I durst not turn to Master Waller now,
Nor need I.—I can fancy how he looks!
I warrant me he scowls on poor Sir William,
As he could eat him up.—I will improve
His discontent, and so make sure of him. [*Aside.*
I flatter you, Sir William? O you men!
You men, that talk so meek, and all the while
Do know so well your power! Who would think
You had a marriageable daughter! You
Did marry very young.

SIR WILLIAM.

A boy!—A boy
Who knew not his own mind.

WIDOW GREEN.

Your daughter's twenty.
Come, you at least were twenty when you married;
That makes you forty.

SIR WILLIAM.

O dear! Widow Green.

WIDOW GREEN.

Not forty?

SIR WILLIAM.

You do quite embarrass me!
I own I have the feelings of a boy,
The freshness and the glow of springtime yet,—
The relish yet for my young school-days' sports;

Could whip a top—could shoot a taw—could play
At prison-bars and leap-frog, so I might—
Not with a limb, perhaps, as supple, but
With quite as supple will.—Yet I confess
To more than forty !

WIDOW GREEN.

Do you say so? Well,
I'll never guess a man's age by his looks
Again.—Poor Master Waller! He must writhe
To hear I think Sir William is so young.
I'll turn his visit yet to more account. [*Aside.*
A handsome ring, Sir William, that you wear !

SIR WILLIAM.

Pray look at it.

WIDOW GREEN.

The mention of a ring
Will take away his breath.

MASTER WALLER.

She must be mine
Whate'er her terms ! [*Aside.*

WIDOW GREEN.

I'll steal a look at him !

MASTER WALLER.

What ! though it be the ring?—the marriage ring?
If that she sticks at, she deserves to wear it !
O, the debate which love and prudence hold ! [*Aside.*

WIDOW GREEN.

How highly he is wrought upon !—His hands

Are clench'd !—I warrant me his frame doth shake !
Poor Master Waller ! I have fill'd his heart
Brimful with passion for me.—The delight
Of proving thus my power !

SIR WILLIAM.

Dear Widow Green !—
She hears not ! How the ring hath set her thinking !
I'll try and make her jealous (*aside*).—Widow Green !

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir William Fondlove !

SIR WILLIAM.

Would you think that ring
Could tell a story ?

WIDOW GREEN.

Could it ? Ah, Sir William !
I fear you are a rogue.

SIR WILLIAM.

O no !

WIDOW GREEN.

You are !

SIR WILLIAM.

No, on my honour ! Would you like to hear
The story of the ring ?

WIDOW GREEN.

Much,—very much.

SIR WILLIAM.

Think'st we may venture draw our chairs apart
A little more from Master Waller ?

WIDOW GREEN.

Yes.
He'll bring it to a scene! Dear—dear Sir William,
How much I am oblig'd to him! A scene!
Gods, we shall have a scene!—Good Master Waller,
Your leave I pray you for a minute, while
Sir William says a word or two to me.
He durst not trust his tongue for jealousy! [*Aside.*
Now, dear Sir William.

SIR WILLIAM.

You must promise me
You will not think me vain.

WIDOW GREEN.

No fear of that.

SIR WILLIAM.

Nor given to boast.

WIDOW GREEN.

O! dear Sir William!

SIR WILLIAM.

Nor
A flirt!

WIDOW GREEN.

O! who would take you for a flirt?

SIR WILLIAM.

How very kind you are!

WIDOW GREEN.

Go on, Sir William.

SIR WILLIAM.

Upon my life, I fear you'll think me vain!
I'm cover'd with confusion at the thought
Of what I've done. 'Twas very, very wrong
To promise you the story of the ring;
Men should not talk of such things.

WIDOW GREEN.

Such as what?
As ladies' favours?

SIR WILLIAM.

'Pon my life, I feel
As I were like to sink into the earth.

WIDOW GREEN.

A lady then it was gave you the ring?

SIR WILLIAM.

Don't ask me to say yes, but only scan
The inside of the ring. How much she's mov'd. [*Aside.*

MASTER WALLER.

They to each other company enough!
I, company for no one but myself.
I'll take my leave, nor trouble them to pay
The compliments of parting. Lydia! Lydia! [*Goes out.*

WIDOW GREEN.

What's here? "Eliza!"—So it was a lady!
How wondrously does Master Waller bear it.
He surely will not hold much longer out. [*Aside.*
Sir William! Nay, look up! What cause to cast
Your eyes upon the ground? What an it were
A lady?

SIR WILLIAM.

You're not angry ?

WIDOW GREEN.

No !

SIR WILLIAM.

She is.
I'll take the tone she speaks in 'gainst the word,
For fifty crowns. I have not told you all
About the ring ; though I would sooner die
Than play the braggart !—yet as truth is truth,
And told by halves, may from a simple thing,
By misconstruction, to a monster grow,
I'll tell the whole truth !

WIDOW GREEN.

Dear Sir William, do !

SIR WILLIAM.

The lady was a maid, and very young ;
Nor there in justice to her must I stop,
But say that she was beautiful as young,
And add to that that she was learned too,
Almost enough to win for her that title,
Our sex, in poor conceit of their own merits,
And narrow spirit of monopoly,
And jealousy which gallantry eschews,
Do give to women who assert their right
To minds as well as we.

WIDOW GREEN.

What ! a blue-stocking ?

SIR WILLIAM.

I see.—She'll come to calling names at last. [*Aside.*
I should offend myself to quote the term.
But to return, for yet I have not done;
And further yet may go, then progress on
That she was young, that she was beautiful.
A wit and learned are nought to what's to come—
She had a heart!——

WIDOW GREEN (*who during* SIR W.'s *speech has turned gradually*).

What, Master Waller gone! [*Aside.*

SIR WILLIAM.

I say she had a heart——

WIDOW GREEN (*starting up*—SIR WILLIAM *also*).

A plague upon her!

SIR WILLIAM.

I knew she would break out! [*Aside.*

WIDOW GREEN.

Here, take the ring.
It has ruin'd me!

SIR WILLIAM.

I vow thou hast no cause
For anger!

WIDOW GREEN.

Have I not? I am undone,
And all about that bauble of a ring.

SIR WILLIAM.

You're right, it is a bauble.

WIDOW GREEN.

And the minx
That gave it thee!

SIR WILLIAM.

You're right, she was a minx.
I knew she'd come to calling names at last. [*Aside.*

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir William Fondlove, leave me.

SIR WILLIAM.

Widow Green!——

WIDOW GREEN.

You have undone me, Sir!

SIR WILLIAM.

Don't say so!—Don't!
It was a girl—a child gave me the ring!

WIDOW GREEN.

Do you hear me, sir? I bade you leave me.

SIR WILLIAM.

If
I thought you were so jealous.

WIDOW GREEN.

Jealous, sir!
Sir William! quit my house.

SIR WILLIAM.

A little girl
To make you jealous!

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir, you'll drive me mad!

SIR WILLIAM.

A child, a perfect child, not ten years old!

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir, I would be alone, sir!

SIR WILLIAM.

Young enough
To dandle still her doll!

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir William Fondlove!——

SIR WILLIAM.

Dear Widow Green!

WIDOW GREEN.

I hate you, sir!—Detest you!—Never wish
To see you more! You have ruin'd me!—Undone me!
A blighted life I wear, and all through you!
The fairest hopes that ever woman nourish'd
You've canker'd in the very blowing! bloom,
And sweet destroy'd, and nothing left me, but
The melancholy stem.

SIR WILLIAM.

And all about
A little slut I gave a rattle to!—
Would pester me for gingerbread and comfits!
A little roguish feigning!—A love trick
I play'd to prove your love!

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir William Fondlove!
If of my own house you'll not suffer me
To be the mistress, I will leave it to you!

SIR WILLIAM.

Dear Widow Green! The ring——

WIDOW GREEN.

Confound the ring,
The donor of it, thee, and every thing! [*Goes out.*

SIR WILLIAM.

She is over head and ears in love with me.
She's mad with love! There's love and all its signs!
She's jealous of me unto very death!
Poor Widow Green! I warrant she is now
In tears!—I think I hear her sob!—Poor thing,
Sir William! O Sir William! You have rais'd
A furious tempest! Set your wits to work
To turn it to a calm. No question that
She loves me!—None then that she'll take me! So
I'll have the marriage settlements made out
To-morrow, and a special licence got,
And marry her the next day! I will make
Quick work of it, and take her by surprise!
Who but a widower a widow's match;
What could she see with else but partial eyes
To guess me only forty! I'm a wonder!
What shall I pass for in my wedding suit!
I vow I am a puzzle to myself,
As well as all the world besides.—Odd's life!
To win the heart of buxom Widow Green! [*Goes out.*

WIDOW GREEN *re-enters with* LYDIA.

WIDOW GREEN.

At last the dotard's gone! Fly, Lydia, fly,

This letter bear to Master Waller straight;
Quick, quick, or I'm undone!—He is abus'd,
And I must undeceive him—own my love,
And heart and hand at his disposal lay.
Answer me not, my girl—Obey me!—Fly. [*Goes out.*

LYDIA.

Untowardly it falls!—I had resolved
This hour to tell her I must quit her service!
Go to his house!—I will not disobey
Her last commands!—I'll leave it at the door,
And as it closes on me think I take
One more adieu of him!—Hard destiny! [*Goes out.*

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN SIR WILLIAM'S.

Enter CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE.

The booby! He must fall in love, indeed!
And now he's nought but sentimental looks
And sentences, pronounc'd 'twixt breath and voice!
And attitudes of tender languishment!
Nor can I get from him the name of her
Hath turn'd him from a stock into a fool.
He hems and haws, now titters, now looks grave!
Begins to speak and halts! takes off his eyes
To fall in contemplation on a chair,

A table, or the ceiling, wall or floor!
I'll plague him worse and worse! O here he comes!

Enter WILDRAKE.

WILDRAKE.

Despite her spiteful usage, I'm resolv'd
To tell her now. Dear neighbour Constance!

CONSTANCE.

Fool!
Accost me like a lady, Sir! I hate
The name of neighbour!

WILDRAKE.

Mistress Constance, then—
I'll call thee that.

CONSTANCE.

Don't call me any thing!
I hate to hear thee speak—to look at thee,
To dwell in the same house with thee!

WILDRAKE.

In what
Have I offended?

CONSTANCE.

What!—I hate an ape!

WILDRAKE.

An ape!

CONSTANCE.

Who bade thee ape the gentleman?
And put on dress that don't belong to thee?
Go! change thee with thy whipper-in or huntsman,
And none will doubt thou wearest thy own clothes.

WILDRAKE.

A pretty pass! Mock'd for the very dress
I bought to pleasure her! Untoward things,
Are women! [*Aside. Walks backwards and forwards.*

CONSTANCE.

Do you call that walking? Pray
What makes you twist your body so, and take
Such pains to turn your toes out? If you'd walk,
Walk thus! walk like a man, as I do now! (*walking*).
Is yours the way a gentleman should walk?
You neither walk like man nor gentleman!
I'll show you how you walk (*mimicking him*). Do you call that walking?

WILDRAKE.

My thanks, for a drill-sergeant twice a day
For her sake! [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE.

Now, of all things in the world,
What made you dance last night?

WILDRAKE.

What made me dance?

CONSTANCE.

Right! It was any thing but dancing! Steps
That never came from dancing school—nor English,
Nor Scotch, nor Irish!—You must try to cut,
And how you did it! (*cuts*). That's the way to cut!
And then you chassè! Thus you went, and thus (*mimicking him*),
As though you had been playing at hop, step,

And jump !—And yet you look'd so monstrous pleas'd,
And play'd the simpleton with such a grace,
Taking the tittering for compliment !
I could have box'd you soundly for't. Ten times,
Denied I that I knew you.

WILDRAKE.

Twenty guineas
Were better in the gutter thrown than gone
To fee a dancing master ! [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE.

And you're grown
An amateur in music !—What fine air
Was that you prais'd last night ?—" The Widow Jones !"
A country jig they've turn'd into a song.
You ask'd " if it had come from Italy ?"
The lady blush'd, and held her peace, and then
You blush'd and said, " Perhaps it came from France !"
And then when blush'd the lady more, nor spoke,
You said, " At least it came from Germany !"
The air was English !—a true English air ;
A downright English air ! A common air,
Old as " When Good King Arthur." Not a square,
Court, alley, street, or lane, about the town,
In which it is not whistled, play'd, or sung !
But you must have it come from Italy,
Or Germany, or France.—Go home ! Go home !
To Lincolnshire, and mind thy dog and horn !
You'll never do for town ! " The Widow Jones"
To come from Italy ! Stay not in town

Or you'll be married to the Widow Jones,
Since you've foresworn, you say, the Widow Green!
And morn and night they'll din your ears with her!
"Well met, dear Master Wildrake.—A fine day!
Pray, can you tell whence came the Widow Jones?"
They love a jest in town!—To Lincolnshire!
You'll never do for town!—To Lincolnshire!
"The Widow Jones" to come from Italy! [*Goes out.*

WILDRAKE.

Confound the Widow Jones! 'Tis true! The air
Well as the huntsman's triple most I know,
But knew not then indeed, 'twas so disguis'd
With shakes and flourishes, outlandish things,
That mar, not grace, an honest English song!
Howe'er the mischief's done! and as for her
She is either into hate or madness fallen.
If madness, would she had her wits again,
Or I my heart—If hate—My love's undone;
I'll give her up. I'll e'en to Master Trueworth,
Confess my treason—own my punishment—
Take horse, and back again to Lincolnshire! [*Goes out.*

CONSTANCE (*returning*).

Not here! I trust I have not gone too far!
If he should quit the house! Go out of town!
Poor neighbour Wildrake! Little does he owe me!
From childhood I've been us'd to plague him thus.
Why would he fall in love, and spoil it all!
I feel as I could cry! He has no right
To marry any one! What wants he with

A wife? Has he not plague enough in me?
Would he be plagued with any body else?
Ever since I have liv'd in town I have felt
The want of neighbour Wildrake! Not a soul
Besides I care to quarrel with, and now
He goes and gives himself to another!—What!
Am I in love with neighbour Wildrake?—No.
I only would not have him marry—marry!
Sooner I'd have him dead than have him marry!

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN MASTER WALLER'S HOUSE.

Enter ALICE, *hastily.*

ALICE—*speaking to the outside.*

FLY, Stephen, to the door! your rapier! quick!—
Our master is beset, because of one
Whose part he takes, a maid, whom lawless men
Would lawlessly entreat! In what a world
We live!—How do I shake!—With what address
[*Looking out of window.*
He lays about him, and his other arm
Engag'd, in charge of her whom he defends!
A damsel worth a broil!—Now Stephen, now!
Take off the odds, brave lad, and turn the scale!
I would I were a swordsman! How he makes
His rapier fly!—Well done!—O Heaven, there's blood,
But on the side that's wrong!—Well done, good Stephen!
Pray Heaven no life be ta'en!—Lay on, brave lad!
He has marked his man again! Good lad—Well done,
I pray no mischief come!—Press on him, Stephen!
Now gives he ground—Follow thy advantage up!
Allow no pause for breath!—Hit him again!
Forbid it end in death!—Lounge home, good Stephen!
How fast he now retreats!—That spring, I'll swear,
Was answer to thy point!—Well fenc'd!—Well fenc'd!
Now Heaven forefend it end in death!—He flies!

And from his comrade, the same moment, hath
Our master jerk'd his sword.—The day is ours!
Quick may they get a surgeon for their wounds,
And I, a cordial for my flutter'd spirits,
I vow, I'm nigh to swoon!

MASTER WALLER—*without.*

Hoa! Alice! Hoa!
Open the door! Quick, Alice! Quick!

ALICE.

Anon!
Young joints do take no thought of aged ones,
But ever think them supple as themselves.

MASTER WALLER.

Alice!

ALICE—*opening the door.*

I'm here. A mercy!—Is she dead?

Enter MASTER WALLER *bearing* LYDIA, *fainting.*

MASTER WALLER.

No!—She but faints—A chair!—Quick, Alice, Quick!
Water to bathe her temples. (ALICE *goes out.*) Such a turn
Did fortune never do me! Shall I kiss
To life these frozen lips?—No!—Of her plight
'Twere base to take advantage. (ALICE *returns, &c.*) All is well,
The blood returns.

ALICE.

How wondrous fair she is!

MASTER WALLER.

Thou think'st her so?—No wonder then should I. [*Aside.*
How say you?—Wondrous fair?

ALICE.

Yes; wondrous fair!
Harm never come to her! So sweet a thing
'Twere pity were abused!

MASTER WALLER.

You think her fair?

ALICE.

Ay marry! Half so fair were more than match
For fairest she e'er saw mine eyes before!
And what a form! A foot and instep there!
Vouchers of symmetry! A little foot
And rising instep, from an ankle arching,
A palm, and that a little one, might span.

MASTER WALLER.

Who taught thee thus?

ALICE.

Why who, but her, taught thee?
Thy mother!—Heaven rest her!—Thy good mother!
She could read men and women by their hands
And feet!—And here's a hand!—A fairy palm!
Fingers that taper to the pinky tips,
With nails of rose, like shells of such a hue,
Berimm'd with pearl, you pick upon the shore!
Save these the gloss and tint do wear without.

MASTER WALLER.

Why, how thou talk'st !

ALICE.

Did I not tell thee thus
Thy mother used to talk ? Such hand and foot,
She would say, in man or woman vouched for nature
High temper'd !—soil for sentiment refined ;
Affection tender ; apprehension quick—
Degrees beyond the generality !
There is a marriage finger ! Curse the hand
Would balk it of a ring !

MASTER WALLER.

She's quite restor'd,
Leave us !—Why cast'st thou that uneasy look ?
Why linger'st thou ? I'm not alone with her.
My honour's with her too. I would not wrong her.

ALICE.

And if thou would'st, thou'rt not thy mother's son. [*Goes out.*

MASTER WALLER.

You are better ?

LYDIA.

Much !—Much !

MASTER WALLER.

Know you him who durst
Attempt this violence in open day ?
He seem'd as he would force thee to his coach,
I saw attending.

LYDIA.

Take this letter, sir,
And send the answer—I must needs be gone.

MASTER WALLER—*throwing the letter away.*

I read no letter! Tell me, what of him
I saw offend thee?

LYDIA.

He hath often met me,
And by design I think, upon the street,
And tried to win mine ear, which ne'er he got
Save only by enforcement. Presents—gifts
Of jewels and of gold to wild amount,
To win an audience, hath he proffered me;
Until, methought, my silence—for my lips
Disdain'd reply where question was a wrong—
Had wearied him. O, Sir! whate'er of life
Remains to me I had foregone, ere prov'd
The horror of this hour!—and you it is
That have protected me!

MASTER WALLER.

O speak not on 't!

LYDIA.

You that have saved me from mine enemy—

MASTER WALLER.

I pray you to forget it.

LYDIA.

From a foe
More dire than he that putteth life in peril—

MASTER WALLER.

Sweet Lydia, I beseech you spare me.

LYDIA.

No!
I will not spare you.—You have brought me safety,
You whom I fear worse than that baleful foe. [*Rises to go.*

MASTER WALLER—*kneeling and snatching her hand.*

Lydia!

LYDIA.

Now make thy bounty perfect. Drop
My hand. That posture, which dishonours thee,
Quit!—for 'tis shame on shame to show respect
Where we do feel disdain. Throw ope thy gate
And let me pass, and never seek with me
By look, or speech, or aught, communion more!

MASTER WALLER.

Thou said'st thou lov'dst me!

LYDIA.

Yes! when I believ'd
My tongue did take of thee its last adieu,
And now that I do know it—for be sure
It never bids adieu to thee again—
Again, I tell it thee! Release me, sir!
Rise!—and no hindrance to my will oppose.
That would be free to go.

MASTER WALLER.

I cannot lose thee!

LYDIA.

Thou canst not have me!

MASTER WALLER.

No!

LYDIA.

Thou canst not. I
Repeat it.—Yet I'm thine—thine every way,
Except where honour fences!—Honour, sir,
Not property of gentle blood alone;
Of gentle blood not always property.
Thou'lt not obey me. Still enforcest me!
O what a contradiction is a man!
What in another he one moment spurns,
The next—he does himself complacently!

MASTER WALLER.

Would'st have me lose the hand that holds my life?

LYDIA.

Hear me and keep it, if thou art a man!
I love thee,—for thy benefit would give
The labour of that hand!—wear out my feet!
Rack the invention of my mind! the powers
Of my heart in one volition gather up!
My life expend, and think no more I gave
Than he who wins a priceless gem for thanks!
For such good will canst thou return me wrong?

MASTER WALLER.

Yet, for a while, I cannot let thee go.
Propound for me an oath that I'll not wrong thee;
An oath which, if I break it, doth entail
Forfeit of earth and heaven. I'll take it—so
Thou stay'st one hour with me.

LYDIA.

No!—Not one moment!
Unhand me, or I shriek!—I know the summons
Will pierce into the street, and set me free!
I stand in peril while I'm near thee! She
Who knows her danger, and delays escape,
Hath but herself to thank, whate'er befalls!
Sir, I may have a woman's weakness, but
I have a woman's resolution, too,
And that's a woman's strength! One moment more!——

MASTER WALLER.

Lo! Thou art free to go!

[*Rises, and throws himself distractedly into a chair.* LYDIA *approaches the door—her pace slackens—she pauses with her hand upon the lock—turns and looks earnestly on* WALLER.

LYDIA.

I have a word
To say to thee; if by thy mother's honour
Thou swear'st to me thou wilt not quit thy seat.

MASTER WALLER.

I swear as thou propound'st to me.

LYDIA (*after a pause, bursting into tears*).

O why—
Why have you used me thus? See what you've done!
Essay'd to light a guilty passion up,
And kindled in its stead a holy one!
For I do love thee! Know'st thou not the wish
To find desert doth bring it oft to sight

Where yet it is not? so for substance passes
What only is a phantasm of our minds!
I fear'd thy love was guilty—yet my wish
To find it honest, stronger than my fear,
My fear with fatal triumph overthrew!
Now hope and fear give up to certainty,
And I must fly thee—yet must love thee still!

MASTER WALLER.

Lydia! By all——

LYDIA.

I pray you hear me out!
Was't right? was't generous? was't pitiful?
One way or other I might be undone:
To love with sin—or love without a hope!

MASTER WALLER.

Yet hear me, Lydia!——

LYDIA.

Stop! I am undone!
A maid without a heart—robb'd of the soil
Wherein life's hopes and wishes root and spring,
And thou the spoiler did me so much hate,
And vow'd me so much love!—But I forgive thee!
Yea I do bless thee! [*Rushing up and sinking at his feet.*
Recollect thy oath!—
Or in thy heart lodg'd never germ of honour,
But 'tis a desert all!

[*She kisses his hand—presses it to her heart, and kisses it again.*

Farewell then to thee! [*Rises.*

May'st thou be happy! [*Going.*

MASTER WALLER.

Would'st ensure the thing
Thou wishest?

[*She moves towards the door with a gesture that prohibits farther converse.*

Stop! [*She continues to move on.*

O sternly resolute! [*She still moves.*

I mean thee honour! [*She stops and turns towards him.*

Thou dost meditate—
I know it—flight. Give me some pause for thought,
But to confirm a mind almost made up.
If in an hour thou hear'st not from me, then
Think me a friend far better lost than won!
Wilt thou do this?

LYDIA.

I will.

MASTER WALLER.

An hour decides! [*They go out severally.*

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN SIR WILLIAM FONDLOVE'S HOUSE.

Enter WILDRAKE *and* TRUEWORTH.

WILDRAKE.

You are not angry?

TRUEWORTH.

No; I knew the service
I sent you on, was one of danger.

WILDRAKE.

Thank you.
Most kind you are—And you believe she loves me;
And your own hopes give up to favour mine.
Was ever known such kindness! Much I fear
'Twill cost you.

TRUEWORTH.

Never mind! I'll try and bear it.

WILDRAKE.

That's right. No use in yielding to a thing.
Resolve does wonders. Shun the sight of her—
See other women. Fifty to be found
As fair as she.

TRUEWORTH.

I doubt it.

WILDRAKE.

Doubt it not.
Doubt nothing that gives promise of a cure.
Right handsome dames there are in Lancashire,
Whence call'd their women witches!—witching things!
I know a dozen families in which
You'd meet a courtesy worthy of a bow.
I'll give you letters to them.

TRUEWORTH.

Will you?

WILDRAKE.

Yes.

TRUEWORTH.

The worth of a disinterested friend!

WILDRAKE.

O Master Trueworth, deeply I'm your debtor!
I own I die for love of neighbour Constance!
And thou to give her up for me! Kind friend!
What won't I do for thee!—Don't pine to death;
I'll find thee fifty ways to cure thy passion,
And make thee heart-whole, if thou'rt so resolv'd.
Thou shalt be master of my sporting stud,
And go a hunting. If that likes thee not,
Take up thy quarters at my shooting lodge;
There is a cellar to't, make free with it.
I'll thank thee if thou emptiest it. The song
Gives out that wine feeds love—it drowns it, man!
If thou wilt neither hunt nor shoot, try games;
Play at loggats, bowls, fives, dominos, draughts, cribbage,
Backgammon—special receipts for love!
And you believe, for all the hate she shows
That neighbour Constance loves me?

TRUEWORTH.

'Tis my thought.

WILDRAKE.

How shall I find it out?

TRUEWORTH.

Affect to love
Another. Say your passion thrives; the day

Is fix'd, and pray her undertake the part
Of bridemaid to your bride. 'Twill bring her out.

WILDRAKE.

You think she'll own her passion?

TRUEWORTH.

If she loves.

WILDRAKE.

I thank thee! I will try it! Master Trueworth,
What shall I say to thee, to give her up,
And love her so?

TRUEWORTH.

Say nothing.

WILDRAKE.

Noble friend!
Kind friend! Instruct another man the way
To win thy mistress! Thou'lt not break my heart?
Take my advice, thou shalt not be in love
A month! Frequent the play-house!—walk the Parks!
I'll think of fifty ladies that I know,
Yet can't remember now—enchanting ones!
And then there's Lancashire!—and I have friends
In Berkshire and in Wiltshire, that have swarms
Of daughters! Then my shooting lodge and stud!
I'll cure thee in a fortnight of thy love!
And now to neighbour Constance—yet almost
I fear accosting her—a hundred times
Have I essayed to break my mind to her.
But still she stops my mouth with restless scorn!
Howe'er thy scheme I'll try, and may it thrive!

For I am sick for love of neighbour Constance.
Farewell, dear Master Trueworth! Take my counsel—
Conquer thy passion! Do so! Be a man! [*Exit.*

TRUEWORTH.

Feat easy done that does not tax ourselves!

Enter PHŒBE.

PHŒBE.

A letter, sir. [*Goes out.*

TRUEWORTH.

Good sooth, a roaming one!
And yet slow traveller. This should have reached me
In Lombardy.—The hand! Give way, weak seal,
Thy feeble let too strong for my impatience!
Ha! Wrong'd!—Let me contain myself!—Compelled
To fly the roof that gave her birth!—My sister!
No partner in her flight but her pure honour!
I am again a brother.—Pillow, board,
I know not till I find her.

Enter WALLER.

WALLER.

Master Trueworth!

TRUEWORTH.

Hah! Master Waller! Welcome, Master Waller.

MASTER WALLER.

Good Master Trueworth, thank you. Finding you
From home, I e'en made bold to follow you,
For I esteem you as a man, and fain
Would benefit by your kind offices.
But let me tell you first, to your reproof,

I am indebted more than e'er I was
To praise of any other. I am come, sir,
To give you evidence I am not one
Who owns advice is right, and acts not on't.

TRUEWORTH.

Pray you, explain.

MASTER WALLER.

Will you the bearer be
Of this to one has cause to thank you, too,
Though I the larger debtor?—Read it, sir.

TRUEWORTH—*reading the letter.*

" At morn to-morrow, I will make you mine.
Will you accept from me the name of wife—
The name of husband give me in exchange?"

MASTER WALLER.

How say you, sir?

TRUEWORTH.

'Tis boldly—nobly done!

MASTER WALLER.

If she consents—which affectation, 'twere
To say I don't—bid her prepare for church,
And you shall act the father, sir, to her
You did the brother by.

TRUEWORTH.

Right willingly.
Though matter of high moment I defer,
Mind, heart, and soul, are all enlisted in!

MASTER WALLER.

May I implore you, haste! A time is set!—
How light an act of duty makes the heart! [*Exeunt together.*

SCENE III.—ANOTHER CHAMBER IN SIR WILLIAM'S HOUSE.

CONSTANCE *discovered.*

CONSTANCE.

I'll pine to death for no man! Wise it were,
Indeed, to die for neighbour Wildrake—No!—
I know the duty of a woman better—
What fits a maid of spirit! I am out
Of patience with myself, to cast a thought
Away upon him. Hang him! Lovers cost
Nought but the pains of living. I'll get fifty,
And break the heart of every one of them!
I will! I'll be the champion of my sex,
And take revenge on shallow fickle man,
Who gives his heart to fools, and slights the worth
Of proper women! I suppose she's handsome!
My face 'gainst hers at hazard of mine eyes!
A maid of mind! I'll talk her to a stand!
Or tie my tongue for life! A maid of soul!
An artful, managing, dissembling one!
Or she had never caught him—he's no man
To fall in love himself, or long ago
I warrant he had fallen in love with me!
I hate the fool—I do. Ha, here he comes.
What brings him hither. Let me dry my eyes;
He must not see I have been crying. Hang him,
I have much to do, indeed, to cry for him!

Enter WILDRAKE.

WILDRAKE.

Your servant, neighbour Constance.

CONSTANCE.

Servant, sir!
Now what, I wonder, comes the fool to say,
Makes him look so important!

WILDRAKE.

Neighbour Constance,
I am a happy man.

CONSTANCE.

What makes you so?

WILDRAKE.

A thriving suit.

CONSTANCE.

In Chancery?

WILDRAKE.

O, no!
In love.

CONSTANCE.

O, true! You are in love! Go on!

WILDRAKE.

Well, as I said, my suit's a thriving one.

CONSTANCE.

You mean you are beloved again!—I don't
Believe it.

WILDRAKE.

I can give you proof.

CONSTANCE.

What proof?

Love-letters? She's a shameless maid
To write them! Can she spell? Ay, I suppose
With prompting of a dictionary!

WILDRAKE.

Nay,
Without one.

CONSTANCE.

I will lay you ten to one
She cannot spell! How know you she can spell?
You cannot spell yourself! You write command
With a single M—C—O—M—A—N—D:
Yours to Co-mand.

WILDRAKE.

I did not say she wrote
Love-letters to me.

CONSTANCE.

Then she suffers you to press
Her hand, perhaps?

WILDRAKE.

She does.

CONSTANCE.

Does she press yours?

WILDRAKE.

She does.—It goes on swimmingly! [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE.

She does!
She is no modest woman! I'll be bound,
Your arm the madam suffers round her waist?

WILDRAKE.

She does!

CONSTANCE.

She does! Outrageous forwardness!
Does she let you kiss her?

WILDRAKE.

Yes.

CONSTANCE.

She should be—

WILDRAKE.

What?

CONSTANCE.

What you got thrice your share of when at school,
And yet not half your due! A brazen-face!
More could not grant a maid about to wed.

WILDRAKE.

She is so.

CONSTANCE.

What?

WILDRAKE.

How swimmingly it goes! [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE—*with suppressed impatience.*

Are you about to marry, neighbour Wildrake?
Are you about to marry?

WILDRAKE.

Excellent. [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE—*breaking out.*

Why don't you answer me?

WILDRAKE.

I am.

CONSTANCE.

You are—

I tell you what, sir—You're a fool !

WILDRAKE.

For what ?

CONSTANCE.

You are not fit to marry ! Do not know
Enough of the world, sir ! Have no more experience,
Thought, judgment, than a school-boy ! Have no mind
Of your own—your wife will make a fool of you,
Will jilt you, break your heart. I wish she may,
I do ! You have no more business with a wife
Than I have ! Do you mean to say indeed
You are about to marry ?

WILDRAKE.

Yes, indeed.

CONSTANCE.

And when ?

WILDRAKE.

I'll say to-morrow ! [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE.

When, I say ?

WILDRAKE.

To-morrow.

CONSTANCE.

Thank you : much beholden to you !
You've told me on't in time ! I'm very much
Beholden to you, neighbour Wildrake ! And,
I pray you, at what hour ?

WILDRAKE.

That we have left

For you to name.

CONSTANCE.

For me!

WILDRAKE.

For you.

CONSTANCE.

Indeed,
You're very bountiful, I should not wonder.
Meant you I should be bridesmaid to the lady?

WILDRAKE.

'Tis just the thing I mean.

CONSTANCE—*furiously.*

The thing you mean!
Now pray you, neighbour, tell me that again,
And think before you speak; for much I doubt
You know what you are saying. Do you mean
To ask me to be bridesmaid?

WILDRAKE.

Even so.

CONSTANCE.

Bridesmaid?

WILDRAKE.

Ay, bridesmaid!—It is coming fast
Unto a head. [*Aside.*

CONSTANCE.

And 'tis for me you wait
To fix the day? It shall be doomsday then!

WILDRAKE.

Be doomsday?

CONSTANCE.

Doomsday !

WILDRAKE.

Wherefore doomsday!

CONSTANCE—*boxes him.*

Wherefore !—
Go ask your bride, and give her that from me.
Look, neighbour Wildrake ! you may think this strange,
But don't misconstrue it ! For you are vain, sir !
And may put down for love what comes from hate.
I should not wonder, thought you I was jealous;
But I'm not jealous, sir !—would not be so
Where it was worth my while—I pray henceforth
We may be strangers, sir—you will oblige me
By going out of town. I should not like
To meet you on the street, sir. Marry, sir !
Marry to-day ! The sooner, sir, the better.
And may you find you have made a bargain, sir.
As for the lady !—much I wish her joy.
I pray you send to me no bride-cake, sir !
Nor gloves—If you do, I'll give them to my maid !
Or throw them into the kennel—or the fire.
I am your most obedient servant, sir ! [*Goes out.*

WILDRAKE.

She is a riddle, solve her he who can ! [*Goes out.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN SIR WILLIAM FONDLOVE'S.

SIR WILLIAM *seated with two Lawyers.*

SIR WILLIAM.

How many words you take to tell few things
Again, again say over what, said once,
Methinks we're told enough.

FIRST LAWYER.

It is the law,
Which labours at precision.

SIR WILLIAM.

Yes; and thrives
Upon uncertainty—and makes it, too,
With all its pains to shun it. I could bind
Myself, methinks, with but the twentieth part
Of all this cordage, sirs.—But every man,
As they say, to his own business. You think
The settlement is handsome?

FIRST LAWYER.

Very, sir.

SIR WILLIAM.

Then now, sirs, we have done, and take my thanks,
Which, with your charges, I will render you
Again to-morrow.

FIRST LAWYER.

Happy nuptials, sir! [*Lawyers go out.*

SIR WILLIAM.

Who passes there? Hoa! send my daughter to me,
And Master Wildrake too! I wait for them.
Bold work!—without her leave to wait upon her,
And ask her go to church!—'Tis taking her
By storm. What else could move her yesterday
But jealousy? What causeth jealousy
But love? She's mine the moment she receives
Conclusive proof like this, that heart and soul,
And mind and person, I am all her own!
Heigh ho! These soft alarms are very sweet,
And yet tormenting too! Ha! Master Wildrake,

[*Enter* WILDRAKE.

I am glad you're ready, for I'm all in arms
To bear the widow off. Come! Don't be sad;
All must go merrily, you know, to-day!——
She still doth bear him hard I see! The girl
Affects him not, and Trueworth is at fault,
Though clear it is that he doth die for her. [*Aside.*
Well, daughter—So I see you're ready too.

[*Enter* CONSTANCE.

Why, what's amiss with thee?

PHŒBE (*entering*).

The coach is here.

SIR WILLIAM.

Come, Wildrake, offer her your arm.

CONSTANCE (*to* WILDRAKE).

I thank you !
I am not an invalid !—can use my limbs !
He knows not how to make an arm befits
A lady lean upon.

SIR WILLIAM.

Why, teach him then.

CONSTANCE.

Teach him ! Teach Master Wildrake ! Teach indeed !
I taught my dog to beg, because I knew
That he could learn it.

SIR WILLIAM.

Peace, thou little shrew !
I'll have no wrangling on my wedding-day !
Hear, take my arm.

CONSTANCE.

I'll not !—I'll walk alone !
Live, die alone ! I do abominate
The fool and all his sex !

SIR WILLIAM.

Again !

CONSTANCE.

I have done.
When do you marry, Master Wildrake ? She
Will want a husband goes to church with thee ! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.

WIDOW GREEN'S *Dressing-room*—WIDOW GREEN *discovered at her Toilet, attended by* AMELIA—WALLER'S *Letter to* LYDIA *in her hand.*

WIDOW GREEN.

O bond of destiny!—Fair bond, that seal'st
My fate in happiness!—I'll read thee yet
Again—although thou'rt written on my heart.
But here his hand, inditing thee, did lie!
And this the tracing of his fingers! So
I read thee that could rhyme thee, as my prayers!
"*At noon to-morrow will I make thee mine.*
Wilt thou receive from me the name of wife—
The name of husband give me in exchange?"
The traitress! to break ope my billet-doux,
And take the envelope!—But I forgive her,
Since she did leave the rich contents behind.
Amelia, give this feather more a slope,
That it sit droopingly. I would look all
Dissolvement, nought about me to bespeak
Boldness! I would appear a timid bride,
Trembling upon the verge of wifehood, as
I ne'er before had stood there! That will do.
Oh dear!—how I am agitated—don't
I look so? I have found a secret out.
Nothing in women strikes a man so much

As to look interesting! Hang this cheek
Of mine! It is too saucy; what a pity
To have a colour of one's own!—Amelia!
Could you contrive, dear girl, to bleach my cheek,
How I would thank you! I could give it then
What tint I chose, and that should be the hectic
Bespeaks a heart in delicate commotion.
I am much too florid! Stick a rose in my hair,
The brightest you can find, 'twill help, my girl,
Subdue my rebel colour—Nay, the rose
Doth lose complexion, not my cheek! Exchange it
For a carnation. That's the flower, Amelia!
You see how it doth triumph o'er my cheek.
Are you content with me?

AMELIA.

I am, my lady.

WIDOW GREEN.

And whither, think you, has the hussy gone,
Whose place you fill so well?—Into the country?
Or fancy you she stops in town?

AMELIA.

I can't
Conjecture.

WIDOW GREEN.

Shame upon her!—Leave her place
Without a moment's warning—with a man too;
Seem'd he a gentleman that took her hence?

AMELIA.

He did.

WIDOW GREEN.

You never saw him here before?

AMELIA.

Never.

WIDOW GREEN.

Not lounging on the other side
Of the street, and reconnoitering the windows?

AMELIA.

Never.

WIDOW GREEN.

'Twas plann'd by letter. Notes, you know,
Have often come to her—But I forgive her,
Since this advice she chanc'd to leave behind
Of gentle Master Waller's wishes, which
I bless myself in blessing!—Gods, a knock!
'Tis he! Show in those ladies are so kind
To act my bridesmaids for me on this brief
And agitating notice (AMELIA *goes out*). Yes, I look
A bride sufficiently! And this the hand
That gives away my liberty again.
Upon my life it is a pretty hand,
A delicate and sentimental hand!
No lotion equals gloves; no woman knows
The use of them that does not sleep in them!
My neck hath kept its colour wond'rously
Well; after all it is no miracle
That I should win the heart of a young man.
My bridesmaids come, Oh dear!

Enter two Ladies.

FIRST LADY.

How do you? A good morning to you—Poor dear,
How much you are affected! Why we thought
You ne'er would summon us.

WIDOW GREEN.

One takes, you know,
When one is flurried, twice the time to dress.
My dears, has either of you salts? I thank you!
They are excellent; the virtue 's gone from mine
Nor thought I of renewing them.—Indeed,
I'm unprovided quite for this affair.

FIRST LADY.

I think the bridegroom 's come!

WIDOW GREEN.

Don't say so! How
You've made my heart jump!

FIRST LADY.

As you sent for us,
A new launch'd carriage drove up to the door;
The servants all in favours.

WIDOW GREEN.

'Pon my life,
I never shall get through it; lend me your hand.

[*Half rises, and throws herself back on her chair again.*

I must sit down again! There came just now
A feeling like to swooning over me.
I am sure before 'tis over I shall make
A fool of myself! I vow I thought not half

So much of my first wedding-day! I'll make
An effort. Let me lean upon your arm,
And give me yours, my dear. Amelia, mind
Keep near me with the smelling bottle.

SERVANT—*entering.*

Madam,
The bridegroom 's come. [*Goes out.*

WIDOW GREEN.

The brute has knocked me down!
To bolt it out so! I had started less
If he had fired a cannon at my ear.
How shall I ever manage to hold up
Till all is done! I'm tremor head to foot.
You can excuse me, can't you?—Pity me.
One may feel queer upon one's wedding-day. [*They go out.*

SCENE THE LAST.—A DRAWING-ROOM.

Enter Servants, showing in SIR WILLIAM FONDLOVE, CONSTANCE, *and* MASTER WILDRAKE—*Servants go out again.*

SIR WILLIAM (*aside to* WILDRAKE).

Good Master Wildrake, look more cheerfully!—Come,
You do not honour to my wedding-day.
How brisk am I? My body moves on springs!
My stature gives no inch I throw away;

My supple joints play free and sportfully;
I'm every atom what a man should be.

WILDRAKE.

I pray you pardon me, Sir William!

SIR WILLIAM.

Smile, then,
And talk, and rally me! I did expect,
Ere half an hour had passed, you would have put me
A dozen times to the blush. Without such things,
A bridegroom knows not his own wedding-day.
I see! Her looks are glossary to thine,
She flouts thee still, I marvel not at thee;
There's thunder in that cloud! I would to-day
It would disperse, and gather in the morning.
I fear me much thou know'st not how to woo.
I'll give thee a lesson. Ever there's a way,
But knows one how to take it! Twenty men
Have courted Widow Green. Who has her now?
I sent to advertise her that to-day
I meant to marry her. She wouldn't open
My note. And gave I up? I took the way
To make her love me! I did send again
To pray her leave my daughter should be bridesmaid.
That letter too came back. Did I give up?
I took the way to make her love me! Yet
Again I sent to ask what church she chose
To marry at; my note came back again;
And did I yet give up? I took the way
To make her love me. All the while I found

She was preparing for the wedding. Take
A hint from me! She comes! My fluttering heart
Gives note the empress of its realms is near.
Now, Master Wildrake, mark and learn from me
How it behoves a bridegroom play his part.

Enter WIDOW GREEN, *supported by her Bridesmaids, and followed by* AMELIA.

WIDOW GREEN.

I cannot raise my eyes—they cannot bear
The beams of his, which, like the sun's, I feel
Are on me, though I see them not, enlightening
The heaven of his young face; nor dare I scan
The brightness of his form, which symmetry
And youth and beauty in enriching vie.
He kneels to me! Now grows my breathing thick,
As though I did await a seraph's voice,
Too rich for mortal ear.

SIR WILLIAM.

My gentle bride!

WIDOW GREEN.

Who's that? who speaks to me?

SIR WILLIAM.

These transports check.
Lo, an example to mankind I set
Of amorous emprise; and who should thrive
In love if not Love's soldier, who doth press
The doubtful siege, and will not own repulse.
Lo! here I tender thee my fealty,
To live thy duteous slave. My queen thou art,

In frowns or smiles, to give me life or death.
Oh, deign look down upon me! In thy face
Alone I look on day; it is my sun
Most bright; the which denied, no sun doth rise.
Shine out upon me, my divinity!
My gentle Widow Green! my wife to be;
My love, my life, my drooping, blushing bride!

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir William Fondlove, you're a fool!

SIR WILLIAM.

A fool?

WIDOW GREEN.

Why come you hither, sir, in trim like this?
Or rather why at all?

SIR WILLIAM.

Why come I hither?
To marry thee!

WIDOW GREEN.

The man will drive me mad!
Sir William Fondlove, I'm but forty, sir,
And you are sixty, seventy, if a day;
At least you look it, sir. I marry you!
When did a woman wed her grandfather?

SIR WILLIAM.

Her brain is turned!

WIDOW GREEN.

You're in your dotage, sir,
And yet a boy in vanity! But know
Yourself from me: you are old and ugly, sir.

SIR WILLIAM.

Do you deny you are in love with me?

WIDOW GREEN.

In love with thee!

SIR WILLIAM.

That you are jealous of me?

WIDOW GREEN.

Jealous!

SIR WILLIAM.

To very lunacy!

WIDOW GREEN.

To hear him!

SIR WILLIAM.

Do you forget what happened yesterday?

WIDOW GREEN.

Sir William Fondlove!—

SIR WILLIAM.

Widow Green, fair play!—
Are you not laughing? Is it not a jest?
Do you believe me seventy to a day?
Do I look it? Am I old and ugly? Why,
Why do I see those favours in the hall,
These ladies dress'd as bridesmaids, thee as bride.
Unless to marry me? [*Knock*

WIDOW GREEN.

He is coming, sir,
Shall answer you for me!

Enter WALLER, *with gentlemen as Bridesmen*

MASTER WALLER.

Where is she? What!
All that bespeaks the day, except the fair
That's queen of it? Most kind of you to grace
My nuptial so! But that I render you
My thanks in full, make full my happiness,
And tell me where's my bride?

WIDOW GREEN.

She 's here.

MASTER WALLER.

Where?

WIDOW GREEN.

Here,
Fair Master Waller!

MASTER WALLER.

Lady, do not mock me.

WIDOW GREEN.

Mock thee! My heart is stranger to such mood
'Tis serious tenderness and duty all.
I pray you mock not me, for I do strive
With fears and soft emotions, that require
Support. Take not away my little strength
And leave me at the mercy of a feather.
I am thy bride! If 'tis thy happiness
To think me so, believe it, and be rich
To thy most boundless wishes! Master Waller,
I am thy waiting bride, the Widow Green!

MASTER WALLER.

Lady, no widow is the bride I seek,

But one the church has never given yet
The nuptial blessing to!

WIDOW GREEN.

What mean you, sir?
Why come a bridegroom here, if not to me
You sued to be your bride? Is this your hand, sir?

[*Showing letter.*

MASTER WALLER.

It is! address'd to your fair waiting-maid.

WIDOW GREEN.

My waiting-maid! The laugh is passing round,
And now the turn is yours, sir. She is gone!
Eloped! run off! and with the gentleman
That brought your billet-doux.

MASTER WALLER.

Is Trueworth false?
He must be false. What madness tempted me
To trust him with such audience as I knew
Must sense, and mind, and soul of man entrance,
And leave him but the power to feel its spell!
Of his own lesson he would profit take,
And plead at once an honourable love,
Supplanting mine, less pure, reformed too late!
And if he did, what merit I, except
To lose the maid I would have wrongly won,
And, had I rightly prized her, now had worn?
I get but my deservings!

[*Enter* TRUEWORTH, *leading in* LYDIA *richly dressed, and veiled from head to foot.*

Master Trueworth,
Though for thy treachery thou hast excuse,
Thou must account for it, so much I lose!
Sir, you have wrong'd me to amount beyond
Acres, and gold, and life, which makes them rich.
And compensation I demand of you,
Such as a man expects, and none but one
That's less than man refuses! Where's the maid
You falsely did abstract?

TRUEWORTH.

I took her hence,
But not by guile, nor yet enforcement, sir,
But of her free will, knowing what she did.
That, as I found I cannot give her back,
I own her state is chang'd, but in her place
This maid I offer you, her image far
As feature, form, complexion, nature go!
Resemblance halting only there, where thou
Thyself didst pause, condition, for this maid
Is gently born and generously bred.
Lo! for your fair loss, fair equivalent!

MASTER WALLER.

Show me another sun, another earth
I can inhabit, as this Sun and Earth;
As thou dids't take the maid, the maid herself
Give back herself, her sole equivalent!

TRUEWORTH.

Her sole equivalent I offer you!
My sister, sir, long counted lost, now found

Who fled her home unwelcome bands to 'scape
Which a half-father would have forc'd upon her,
Taking advantage of her brother's absence
Away on travel in a distant land!
Return'd, I missed her; of the cause received
Invention, coward, false and criminating!
And gave her up for lost, but happily
Did find her yesterday—Behold her, sir! [*Removes veil.*

MASTER WALLER.

Lydia!

WIDOW GREEN.

My waiting-maid!

WALLER.

Thy sister, Trueworth!
Art thou fit brother to this virtuous maid?

TRUEWORTH (*giving* LYDIA *to* WALLER).

Let this assure thee.

LYDIA (*to* WIDOW GREEN).

Madam, pardon me
My double character, for honesty,
No other end assumed—and my concealment
Of Master Waller's love. In all things else
I trust I may believe you hold me blameless;
At least, I'll say for you I should be so,
For it was pastime, madam, not a task
To wait upon you! Little you exacted,
And ever made the most of what I did
In mere obedience to you.

WIDOW GREEN.

Give me your hand;
No love without a little roguery.
If you do play the mistress well as maid,
You will bear off the bell! There never was
A better girl!——I have made myself a fool.
I am undone, if goes the news abroad.
My wedding-dress I donned for no effect
Except to put it off! I must be married.
I'm a lost woman, if another day
I go without a husband!—What a sight
He looks by Master Waller!—Yet he is physic
I die without, so needs must gulp it down.
I'll swallow him with what good grace I can,
Sir William Fondlove!

SIR WILLIAM.

Widow Green!

WIDOW GREEN.

I own
I have been rude to you. Thou dost not look
So old by thirty, forty, years as I
Did say. Thou'rt far from ugly—very far;
And as I said, Sir William, once before,
Thou art a kind and right good humoured man:
I was but angry with you! Why, I'll tell you
At more convenient season—and you know
An angry woman heeds not what she says,
And will say anything!

SIR WILLIAM.

I were unworthy
The name of man, if an apology
So gracious came off profitless, and from
A lady! Will you take me, Widow Green?

WIDOW GREEN.

Hem! [*Courtesies.*

TRUEWORTH (*to* WILDRAKE).

Master Wildrake dressed to go to church!
She has acknowledged, then, she loves thee?—No?
Give me thy hand, I'll lead thee up to her.

WILDRAKE.

'Sdeath! what are you about? You know her not.
She'll brain thee!

TRUEWORTH.

Fear not: come along with me.
Fair Mistress Constance!

CONSTANCE.

Well, sir!

WILDRAKE (*to* TRUEWORTH).

Mind!

TRUEWORTH.

Don't fear.
Love you not neighbour Wildrake?

CONSTANCE.

Love, sir!

TRUEWORTH.

Yes,
You do.

CONSTANCE.

He loves another, sir, he does!
I hate him. We were children, sir, together
For fifteen years and more; there never came
The day we did not quarrel, make it up,
Quarrel again, and make it up again:
Were never neighbours more like neighbours, sir,
Since he became a man, and I a woman,
It still has been the same; nor cared I ever
To give a frown to any other, sir.
And now to come and tell me he's in love,
And ask me to be bridesmaid to his bride!
How durst he do it, sir!—to fall in love!
Methinks at least he might have asked my leave,
Nor had I wondered had he asked myself, sir!

WILDRAKE.

Then give thyself to me!

CONSTANCE.

How! what!

WILDRAKE.

Be mine,
Thou art the only maid thy neighbour loves.

CONSTANCE.

Art serious, neighbour Wildrake?

WILDRAKE.

In the church
I'll answer thee, if thou wilt take me; though
I neither dress, nor walk, nor dance, nor know

"The Widow Jones" from an Italian, French
Or German air.

CONSTANCE.

No more of that.—My hand.

WILDRAKE.

Giv'st it as free as thou didst yesterday?

CONSTANCE—*affecting to strike him.*

Nay!

WILDRAKE.

I will thank it, give it how thou wilt.

WIDOW GREEN.

A triple wedding! May the Widow Green
Obtain brief hearing e'er she quits the scene,
The Love-Chase to your kindness to commend
In favour of an old, now absent, friend!

THE END.

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